THEOLOGY AND "DISCLOSURE MODELS": AN INTERPRETATION AND CRITIQUE OF IAN RAMSEY'S WRITINGS

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Notre Dame in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

by

Rev. John J.oseph McCluskey, M.H.M., M.A.

DW Burrell, csc
Director

Department of Philosophy
Notre Dame, Indiana
February 1969

INTRODUCTION

During the 1950s, it was the "Theology and Falsification" controversy which dominated discussions in Analytical Philosophy of Religion, and attention was concentrated on the factual claims made, implicitly or explicitly, in Religious and Theological Language. Insofar as theological sentences stated anything, made any claim to being true, proposed any argument or recommended any explanation, they were in the same boat, and subject to the same hazards, as scientific sentences. As forms of knowledge, Theology and Science were in principle indistinguishable; as accounts of, or inquiries into, "what in fact is the case", they were equally and essentially vulnerable to falsification by the possibility of counter evidence being adduced. From this it seemed an easy step to the conclusion that since Theology did not in fact, and could not in principle, operate under these conditions, it must surrender any claim to be a form of knowledge. A theologian who would allow any evidence to count decisively against the claim that God is love would be disowned by the religious believer, while his refusal even to entertain such a possibility would disqualify him as a serious searcher after truth, since he makes assertions of a kind that will not admit of refutation.

Of the many rejoinders to this line of criticism, one of the most fruitful is the approach taken by Ian Ramsey in Religious Language, published in 1957, and considerably improved in the decade that has elapsed since then. His most valuable contribution is to have shifted the comparison of theological and scientific language from the topic of facts asserted to the question of how understanding is achieved in Science and Theology respectively. Discussion of the role of models, in recent Philosophy of Science, has significantly altered the understanding of scientific language from which the comparison proceeds, and the realization of this is beginning to bear fruit in some current inquiries into the role of models in theological language. In this dissertation the attempt will be made to bring this fresh topic in Philosophical Theology into sharper focus, by examining its development in Ramsey's writings. The plan will be to set it in the context of his thought as this developed during the past twenty years, and then proceed towards an evaluation.

Ramsey's writing is not systematic; everything he has published to date was written for a specific purpose or occasion, for an endowed lecture series, a Journal or a Symposium. He has promised a more systematic and philosophical presentation of his thought, and although this has not yet appeared he assures us that it is still forthcoming.[1] It

[1] 1957:1, Religious Language, p. 9. Cf. 1965:4, "The Intellectual Crisis. . .", p. 110. All references to Ramsey

remains to be seen if his present episcopal status will enhance or further inhibit this necessary project. Meanwhile his reputation is established, and his ideas have been picked up, or rejected, without much attention being payed to the long and rather rambling roots that feed them. This dissertation aims to present what we will call his 'theory of theological models' in its complex setting; to show where the theory comes from, tracking down the diverse sources on which he draws, displaying the many complex moves he makes. The initial purpose is exploratory rather than critical, and the exposition makes every effort to make explicit, and to share, the framework within which he works. The result of this exercise is to enable the kind of internal criticism that is most effective, and likely to be most fruitful. By assembling and organizing the many aspects of his thought, and trying to hold them together in our own minds, we find ourselves projecting them on a scale where the weaknesses, the gaps and blurred areas, become clearly visible, and where we are brought to realize how much has been attempted, and how little completed. The lessons to be learned from this are drawn out in the concluding critical chapter.

---

will be made in this way. Full details will be found in the bibliography, which is arranged chronologically. Thus 1957:1, etc. refers one to the first work listed for the year 1957.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have to thank the Arthur J. Schmidt Foundation for assistance during the first year of my work on this dissertation, and the Woodrow Wilson Foundation for a Dissertation Fellowship enabling me to finish it.

My Superiors, particularly Father Mahon in Mill Hill, London, and Father Heymans, in Albany, New York, leave me in their debt by the generous way in which they have encouraged me, and given me the time and the freedom needed to complete the task set me.

To the University of Notre Dame, and to the Philosophy Department, in particular, I am most grateful for what has been a very enriching experience. Father McMullin, as Chairman of the Department, has in many ways helped make my time here more fruitful and rewarding than I could ever have expected. Father Burrell, my Director, and Professor Harry Nielsen, now at the University of Windsor, Canada, must be singled out for special mention: I am deeply grateful to both for all they have done for me.

I am especially grateful to Bishop Ramsey for the interest he has shown in my work and for the help he gave me at a critical point in its development. Professor Jerry H. Gill, of Southwestern University, also put me in his debt by making available to me a set of unpublished course notes, compiled by Bishop Ramsey while at Oxford.

In thanking my typist, Mrs. Ann Lauer, I can only say it is a pleasure to find friendliness and efficiency so attractively combined.

I have many friends to whom I would wish to pay tribute here for lighting up my path, and lightening my step. To all of them: thank you.

Finally, to my Mother and Father, Brother and Sisters I dedicate this dissertation, as a somewhat bulky acknowledgement of their share in it, and of the support I never fail to find in them.

CONTENTS

page

Chapter I: Theology and Empiricism: Ian Ramsey's Theme 2

1. 'The Challenge of Contemporary Empiricism'. . . 3
2. The Makings of a Response 30

Chapter II: The Concept of a Disclosure Situation . . 58

1. Experience. 58
2. Disclosure Situation. 93

Chapter III: The Concept of a Disclosure Model. . . . 109

1. Models and Reliable Discourse 109
2. Models and Mystery. 160

Chapter IV: Critique. 187

1. The Concept of Disclosure Situation 188
2. The Concept of Disclosure Model 204
3. Models: Religious and/or Theological?. 215
4. Conclusion. 232

Bibliography 235

Chapter I: Theology and Empiricism: Ian Ramsey's Theme

page
1. 'The Challenge of Contemporary Empiricism' . . 3

1.01 The Development of Contemporary Empiricism . . 3
1.1 Empiricist Theories of Meaning 6
1.11 Logical Atomism. 7
1.12 Logical Positivism 10
1.13 Linguistic Analysis. 14
1.131 The Later Wittgenstein 15
1.14 Ramsey's Conclusions 18
1.2 Empiricist Theories of Language. 20
1.21 Logic and Grammar. 21
1.211 Carnap and Logical Syntax. 22
1.212 'Depth Grammar' and 'Logical Behaviour'. . . . 23
1.213 Ramsey's Conclusions 24
1.22 Hierarchy of Languages 25
1.221 Ramsey's Reflections 28

2. The Makings of a Response. 30

2.1 Mapping Theological Language 32
2.11 The Concept of a Language Map. 32
2.12 Levels of Language, Different Language Maps. . 34
2.13 Total Language Map, Hierarchy of Languages . . 37
2.131 The Language of Science is Incomplete. 39
2.1311 The Fragmentation of Science 42
2.1312 The Limitations of Scientific Method 44
2.132 Conclusions. 45
2.14 Metaphysics and the Total Map. 46
2.141 Index Words. 46
2.142 Apex Word. 50
2.143 Metaphysics and Theology 52

CHAPTER I

THEOLOGY AND EMPIRICISM: IAN RAMSEY'S THEME

It is not a difficult matter to gather from Ramsey's writing what it is that preoccupies him most. He is perhaps over-fond of repeatedly aligning himself with 'contemporary empiricists' while pursuing theological discussions, to the inevitable annoyance of many, if not most, empiricists and not a few theologians. He is clearly convinced, however, that the discussions which are characteristic of contemporary empiricism are relevant to, and important for, theology; they present, as he puts it, a challenge which must be met while at the same time making available valuable methods or techniques to ensure greater clarity and precision in thinking. This is the conviction from which all his work proceeds, and it will be the aim of this chapter to examine it closely, not with a view to immediate criticism but in an attempt, rather, to understand what is involved in it. Proceeding on the basis of this understanding, subsequent chapters will pay close critical attention to his performance of the task he has set himself, emphasis again being laid, for methodological reasons, on critical exposition prior to any larger questioning of his approach. In other words, the attempt will be made to discover how Ramsey understands his task and how he carries it through; only when that is clear may it fairly be asked if he is on the right track or not.

1. 'The Challenge of Contemporary Empiricism'

Ramsey has written of himself as

> an empirical philosopher with a scientific training, who brought this background to the study of theology and whose present dominant concern is to face as squarely as possible the challenge of contemporary empiricism to religious belief, an empiricism often called (but not very correctly in the light of recent developments) 'logical positivism'.[1]

In his own, usually sketchy, outlines of the development of contemporary empiricism and of the challenge it has offered to theology, Ramsey distinguishes a concern with meaning and an interest in language.[2] The two cannot easily be kept apart, but the distinction does serve a useful purpose in that it facilitates more detailed discussions of different, though closely related, themes. Before taking them up in turn, however, it will be helpful to review briefly the general character and scope of what he calls contemporary empiricism.

1.01 The Development of Contemporary Empiricism

Perhaps the most general characteristic of contemporary empiricism is its preoccupation with the tasks of analysis and a largely hostile attitude to the long tradition of metaphysical speculation in philosophy. There are two forms of this with important differences which Ramsey does not always make clear. The one which he stresses is the reaction against Idealist metaphysics by Moore and Russell, who took the line that philosophical speculation of this kind was a mistake, to be accounted for by the failure to recognize the power of language to mislead. Careful analysis was needed to bring out the idiosyncracies and limitations of so versatile an instrument of thought, and greater attention should be given to the meaning of what is said before contending for or against its truth. Moore and Russell, however, differed significantly in the prosecution of this task. Moore was content to confront the extravagant language of metaphysicians with the plain 'natural' language of men, including metaphysicians, when they were themselves. Russell, on the other hand, sought clarity by displaying the logical form of what was said, and confronting the metaphysicians' claims with the rules or logical possibilities of their language, whose structural characteristics and limitations he has tried to make clear.

---

[1] 1962:1, "Christian Education . . .", pp. 95-96.

[2] Cf. esp. 1960:1, "Contemporary Empiricism . . .", pp. 174-181.

The other form taken by contemporary empiricism, commonly known as Logical Positivism, is German and Austrian in origin. Influenced by Russell, and like him accepting as the paradigm of analysis the reduction to fundamental logical form, their conception of philosophy was much more restricted and less flexible than was Russell's. They flatly rejected the possibility of a metaphysical, or any other claim to knowledge which was at the same time a claim to exemption from the rules governing, and the tests controlling, the search for truth by the scientific community. This form of empiricism, of which Carnap may be taken as the principal spokesman, is without a doubt the most outspoken and most determined of the 'challengers' Ramsey has in mind.

The name of Wittgenstein must of course be linked with both Russell's and the Logical Positivists' view of analysis, since his Tractatus played an important part in the development of their thinking in the '20s and '30s. But it is with the later developments that his influence has been most telling. Reacting against his own views in the Tractatus about the kind of analysis that was needed to display the meaning of what was said, he led the discussion away from the ground marked out, in their different ways, by Russell and the Logical Positivists, to a position not unlike Moore's. It differed from Moore's in the greater emphasis placed on 'situation' as an integral element in any use of language, and hence in any determination of its meaning. Another difference which Ramsey notes, and of which he makes much, is the emphasis given to the logical complexity of language. Language is not now viewed as homogeneous, there is no single or privileged logical structure, no prescribed paradigm by which to determine what is meant. He attaches great importance to this, but an examination of it must be delayed until we have looked more carefully at the other positions alluded to, of which it is in part a development and in part a criticism.

Having briefly reconnoitered the area in which Ramsey locates the challenge we have to discuss, and having identified some of the sources from which it is said to issue, it remains to consider in more detail what precisely the nature of the challenge is in each case. This will be done by filling out Ramsey's account of it, with a view to making clear what he considers important in the work of these philosophers, and what mistaken or deficient. The point, however, will not be to test his understanding of such as Russell, Carnap and Wittgenstein, so much as to lay the foundation for an understanding and assessment of his response, i.e. of his own proposed version of an empiricism in which some of the insights he recognizes in their work is given a metaphysical turn and placed at the service of theology.

1.1 Empiricist Theories of Meaning

While it is important to recognize that there is not one but several empiricist theories of meaning, it is nonetheless true that they all agree in requiring the theologian and metaphysician to clarify their positions by submitting to the kind of analysis of which they approve. Ramsey accepts the usefulness of, and need for, analysis as an aid to clear and reliable thinking in theology, but the type of analysis he proposes is the fruit of his own critical reflection on the course taken by the discussion in the past half century, combining what he considers good in the different views and developing what he thinks inadequate. For a fuller record of his reasoning here we must wait for the publication of his long-promised Fact, Metaphysics and God,[3] but his line of thought is sufficiently clear for our purpose, which is simply to trace the foundations of the programme of analysis we have to examine.

1.11 Logical Atomism

If we postpone reference to Moore's style of analysis, the obvious place to begin is with Russell, the initiator of so much that is characteristic of contemporary empiricism. Russell's views do not lend themselves to summary treatment because of the continuous development and self-criticism that has characterized his thinking, and the tendency—to which Ramsey is no exception—has too often been to concentrate on the early period of a long career, particularly on what Russell himself has called his Philosophy of Logical Atomism. Such a course is unavoidable, however, and need not be misleading, where the stated intention is to study in its purest form the type of analysis which Russell favours, and which set the tone for subsequent developments. Consequently in this section it will be enough to remind ourselves of the kind of analysis which Russell, and Wittgenstein in the Tractatus, considered appropriate to the task of determining the meaning of a sentence.

---

[3] 1957:1, Religious Language, p. 9. Cf. 1965:4, "Intellectual Crisis . . .", p. 110.

Comparing it with physical analysis, Russell considered philosophical analysis as a reduction to simples, its purpose being to lay bare the basic atomic structure of language:

> The reason that I call my doctrine logical atomism is because the atoms that I wish to arrive at as the sort of last residue in analysis are logical atoms and not physical atoms.[4]

Writing in the Introduction to the Tractatus, Russell says:

> The essential business of language is to assert or deny facts. Given the syntax of a language, the meaning of a sentence is determinate as soon as the meaning of the component words is known. In order that a certain sentence should assert a certain fact there must, however the language may be constructed, be something in common between the structure of the sentence and the structure of the fact.[5]

Thus the meaning of a sentence is the fact which it asserts or denies, and the task of analysis is to exhibit this by reducing the sentence to its primitive logical form in which will be seen reflected the form of the simple or atomic fact to which it corresponds.

---

[4] B. Russell, "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism" (1918), Logic and Knowledge, ed. R. C. Marsh (1956), p. 179.

[5] L. Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-philosophicus (1922; 1963), Introduction, p. x.

> In a logically perfect language the words in a proposition would correspond one by one with the components of the corresponding fact, with the exception of such words as 'or', 'not', 'if, 'then', which have a different function. In a logically perfect language, there will be one word and no more for every simple object, and everything that is not simple will be expressed by a combination of words, by a combination derived, of course, from the words for the simple things that enter in, one word for each simple component. A language of that sort will be completely analytic, and will show at a glance the logical structure of the facts asserted or denied.[6]

Here is a picture theory of meaning, or a correspondence theory in the strictest sense, and although Russell warns against the danger of supposing that "there is just one thing that is meant by meaning",[7] he does construe 'meaning' as a mirroring of fact. This is not the place to trace the development of such a theory. Suffice it to note that questions about meaning become, on this view, questions about the basic empirical propositions—or protocol sentences—to which the most complex language (if meaningful) can be reduced.

Even on this sketchy treatment, it is clear that the type of analysis advocated by Russell will require of the theologian that he reduce, or relate, his language to the same basic empirical level. It is an interesting question whether this can be turned in such a way that what is required of the theologian is rather that he show how his language is constructed out of, grounded in, that basic empirical level. The latter formulation of the 'challenge' is the one Ramsey favours, as we will see, although it is derived rather from a critique of Russell's analysis than from an acceptance of his programme.

---

[6] Marsh, pp. 197-198.

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 186-187.

The challenge to the theologian, latent in Russell's programme of analysis, becomes explicit and emphatic in the writings of the Logical Positivists. Russell does not himself accept the more negative conclusions of this fresh development but, those apart, he is in general agreement with its aims.[8] It is to the Logical Positivists' version of empiricism, then, that we now turn.

1.12 Logical Positivism

On this approach, too, a question about meaning is a question about fact; the only exception is that of a mathematical or purely logical question where an appeal to experience is irrelevant, since all that is required there is a syntactical ruling on the use of the symbols concerned. In every other instance the meaning of a proposition reduces to the experience to which the proposition is relevant. It may be worth noting, however, that 'experience' as used here takes on a somewhat active sense, appeal being made to the possibility of 'experiencing'—of observing, confirming, testing—the truth of what is asserted.

---

[8] Cf. "Logical Positivism" (1950), in Marsh, pp. 367-382.

> In order to find the meaning of a proposition, we must transform it by successive definitions until finally only such words occur in it as can no longer be defined, but whose meanings can only be directly pointed out. The criterion of the truth or falsity of the proposition then lies in the fact that under definite conditions (given in the definition) certain data are present, or not present. If this is determined then everything asserted by the proposition is determined, and I know its meaning. If I am unable, in principle, to verify a proposition, that is, if I am absolutely ignorant of how to proceed, of what I must do in order to ascertain its truth or falsity, then obviously I do not know what the proposition actually states, and I should then be unable to interpret the proposition by passing from the words, with the aid of the definitions, to possible experiences. For in so far as I am able to do this I am able in the same way to state at least in principle the method of verification (even though, often, because of practical difficulties I am unable to carry it out). The statement of the conditions under which a proposition is true is the same as the statement of its meaning, and not something different.[9]

This lengthy quotation from Schlick may be taken as a typical statement of the Logical Positivist position on this matter, and it may be instructive to notice that he does not approve of it being called a 'theory of meaning': it is rather an insight into the conditions which alone make knowledge possible.

> If we but once attain the insight that the meaning of every proposition can be determined only by means of the given we can no longer conceive the possibility of another opinion, for we see that we have discovered

---

[9] M. Schlick, "Positivism and Realism" (1932), Logical Positivism, ed. A. J. Ayer (1959), p. 87.

> simply the conditions under which opinions in general can be formulated. Hence it would be quite mistaken to see, somehow, in what we have said a 'theory of meaning' . . . What preceeds every formulation of a theory cannot itself be a theory.[10]

Language, then, which intends to be informative, which is addressed to our understanding and claims to add to our knowledge, must conform to the rules governing scientific discourse. The Physicalist thesis of Carnap is the earliest and most extreme form which this view has taken, but even in more modified versions the assumption is always the same: the meaning of a proposition is the information it conveys about the world, information which admits of public testing. Such a proposition has meaning because what is asserted can be shown to be true (to the facts) or not; all others which cannot settle their claims belong to the private subjective world of feelings, attitudes, etc. We give expression to such feelings and attitudes in many ways—in visual art, in music, in the manner of our behaviour, in our 'style of life'—but most often we have recourse to words. There is no question but that this is a legitimate and necessary use of language, but it is one which the Logical Positivists insist must be severely segregated from the scientific—descriptive, informative, as opposed to the 'merely expressive'—use. This, of course, is the distinction on which Carnap insists in his classical paper, "The

[10] Ibid., p. 88.

Elimination of Metaphysics":

> What is here essential for our considerations is only the fact that art is an adequate, metaphysics an inadequate means for the expression of the basic attitude (toward life). Of course, there need be no intrinsic objection to one's using any means of expression one likes. But in the case of metaphysics we find this situation: through the form of its works it pretends to be something that it is not. The form in question is that of a system of statements which are apparently related as premises and conclusions, that is, the form of a theory. In this way the fiction of theoretical content is generated, whereas, as we have seen there is no such content. It is not only the reader, but the metaphysician himself who suffers from the illusion that the metaphysical statements say something, describe states of affairs. The metaphysician believes that he travels in territory in which truth and falsehood are at stake. In reality, however, he has not asserted anything, but only expressed something, like an artist. . . . Metaphysicians are musicians without musical ability. Instead they have a strong inclination to work within the medium of the theoretical, to connect concepts and thoughts. Now, instead of activating, on the one hand, this inclination in the domain of science, and satisfying, on the other hand, the need for expression in art, the metaphysician confuses the two and produces a structure which achieves nothing for knowledge and something inadequate for the expression of attitude.[11]

Here without a doubt we have the most uncompromising attack ever on the possibility of metaphysics or theology. The confidence, however, which characterized the movement, as it may properly be called, in the 1930s, has waned somewhat since, and empiricism has come to be recognized as a considerably more subtle and accomodating philosophy than the Logical Positivists were originally prepared to allow. It is to such a chastened—less doctrinaire, more adequate

---

[11] R. Carnap, "The Elimination of Metaphysics through Logical Analysis of Language" (1932), Ibid., pp. 79-80.

—empiricism that Ramsey attaches most importance, and a brief survey of some typical recent developments in this direction may serve to suggest the reason for this. That done, it should be possible to appreciate more precisely what Ramsey accepts as the legitimate and relevant conditions for meaningful talk, from among the many laid down by contemporary empiricists.

1.13 Linguistic Analysis

Under this amorphous title are grouped those philosophers who, while pursuing the same kind of questions, have been critical of the excessively formal methods employed, and of the restrictions which have been forced on the inquiry as a result. A number of them, notably Wittgenstein, Ryle and Wisdom, have in their different ways worked through some of the earlier stages of analysis. Having attempted the reduction of language to its basic logical form and sponsored or applauded the proposed construction of an ideal, unambiguous logical language, they have had to admit not only that the project had failed, but that it was mistaken from the start. It is language as we find it, in its many and varied uses, that gives rise to the question of meaning, and the answer, to be adequate, must meet the question at that same level, and be as varied and subtle in its turn.

What characterizes this approach, then, is its abandonment of the ideal of a clear, unambiguous language as the standard measure of 'meaning' or significance, and the return to the lived level of language on which the question originally arises, and to which any attempt to answer it must be relevant. In this sense, it may be seen as a return to what is most characteristic in Moore's work, to this extent at least, that the analysis of an expression's meaning is not thought of as the remedy for what is defective in non-philosophical language. Whatever other differences we may notice in Moore's style of analysis, it is like the one we are now considering in its preoccupation with language as it actually is—in use—and not as philosophers and logicians would have it be.[12]

1.131 The Later Wittgenstein

Wittgenstein's return to Cambridge and to philosophy in 1929 seems to be the decisive event, although it is well to remember that this same year marks the publication by the Vienna Circle of their Manifesto. Logical Positivism prevailed in the 1930s, but the patient probings of Wittgenstein and those whom he influenced during the same period were to be of more lasting significance. He made a completely fresh start on the problems which he thought, in the Tractatus, to have finally solved, because he found his work to have been, if not totally vitiated, at least seriously misled by the unexamined assumption that there was

[12] On Moore, see A. R. White, G. E. Moore (1958).

only one possible use for language, viz. to "picture reality", "to convey thoughts" or information about the world.[13] In his lectures of 1930 he began the long and rewarding process of thinking his way out of this and other bewitching simplifications:

> The meaning of a word is no longer for us an object corresponding to it.[14]

He is not here denying that the meaning of a word might be an object, but only that it must be. Speaking more generally of a 'sign', he says that the meaning of a sign is not to be thought of as something to which it points, nor as something carried or conveyed by the sign; it is better to say that it is "the life of the sign", and

> if we had to name anything which is the life of the sign, we should have to say that it was its use.[15]

The net result of this new approach is to have called attention away from the search for facts which alone can give substance—meaning—to an expression or proposition, and to have fixed it instead on the linguistic setting to which the expression or proposition in question properly belongs, in which it works.

---

[13] Cf. L. Wittgenstein, Tractatus 4.01 "A proposition is a picture of reality. A proposition is a model of reality as we imagine it." Philosophical Investigations, #304 stresses the need for "a radical break with the idea that language always functions in one way, always serves the same purpose: to convey thoughts . . .".

[14] G. E. Moore, "Wittgenstein's Lectures in 1930-33", Philosophical Papers (1959), p. 255.

[15] L. Wittgenstein, The Blue and Brown Books (1958), p. 4. Cf. Philosophical Investigations (1953), #43: "For a large class of cases—though not for all—in which we employ the word 'meaning' it can be defined thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language."

> The sign (the sentence) gets its significance from the system of signs, from the language to which it belongs. Roughly: understanding a sentence means understanding a language.[16]

It might now seem that the question has become a purely linguistic one: understanding a word means understanding a language, knowing how it is related to other words, with no further interest shown in 'the world'. On the contrary, however, far from being purely linguistic, there is little tolerance on this new approach for any kind of break between language and 'experience' or 'the given'. Language is no longer considered as simply a convention, a vehicle of thought mediating between the world and mind, a mirror held up to the world to reflect, or reveal, its structure. On the contrary, it is "a form of life": to understand a language, if we may paraphrase Wittgenstein, is to understand a form of life.[17] It is not immediately obvious how much is covered by this phrase "a form of life", but the intention does seem to be that it embrace a totality, and that language, instead of being set off over against the world—like a mirror or map—be recognized for what it is: "part of an activity, or of a form of

[16] The Blue and Brown Books, p. 5.

[17] Philosophical Investigations, #19: ". . . to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life".

life".[18] In this way it is always empirically gounded, and any inquiry into its meaning must always begin and end with the form of life which is given with it, and which alone gives it meaning.

> What is to be accepted, the given, is—so one could say—forms of life.[19]

1.14 Ramsey's Conclusions

Enough has been said to indicate the direction being taken by Wittgenstein, and it is not possible to do more than this here. There will be opportunity later to notice other aspects of his thinking as they are suggested by Ramsey's own discussion. The same must be said for others, notably Ryle, who differ in important ways from Wittgenstein while sharing his broader and more accomodating approach. Ramsey is more interested ~~in~~ this broader approach that they share than in the differences that mark them off one from another. This is clear from the following passage in which he offers an interpretation of Wittgenstein that is more reminiscent of Ryle, but which cannot be said to misrepresent the general intent of this, as opposed to earlier, forms of analysis.

> 'Don't look for meaning, look for use' is a favourite slogan of Wittgenstein. If we recognize a word at all (Wittgenstein implied in this typical aphorism), we

[18] Ibid., #23.

[19] Ibid., part II, xi, p. 226.

> already know the meaning. But what we can learn and what philosophy exists to teach us is the use of the word, i.e. its logical behaviour, i.e. the logical connections it has with other words in ordinary discourse: recognising that ordinary discourse may be richly variegated. The highest aim of philosophy must be to generalize about the logical pattern of the most complex discourse, not excluding metaphysical and theological discourse, and to give clues to its logical structure, to search for illuminating paradigm cases, such as the Verification Principle provides in a simple and elementary, even if important, case, viz. scientific discourse.[20]

Doubtless the ascription of this "favourite slogan" to Wittgenstein himself may be ill-founded, and the suggestion that it was Wittgenstein who thought of "the highest aim of philosophy" in terms of "generalizing about the logical pattern of the most complex discourse" is clearly inaccurate. Yet, questions of exegesis apart, it can be allowed that he correctly characterized the most recent phase of contemporary empiricism in its preoccupation with the question of meaning as, largely, a question of 'use'. It is clear that he approves of the way in which the whole discussion has developed, moving as it has from a narrow and rather dogmatic basis, to one that is more open, indeed more 'empirical' since it recognizes the complexity of the question and of the answers that are possible. We can best conclude at this point with his own reflections on the course taken by the discussion, and on the lessons to be learned from it.

[20] 1960:1, "Contemporary Empiricism . . .", p. 178.

In these different ways then Anglo-Saxon empiricism over the last fifty years has concentrated on the problem of meaning, and except for the early Russell and some of the logical positivists, this emphasis on meaning has turned our attention not on objects—sense-data or other, which might be said to be the 'meanings' of words—but rather to the contextual setting of words and the patterns of behaviour into which words and sentences are interlocked. If at this stage we wished to formulate any interim conclusions which might have bearing on philosophical theology, we might list them as three:

(i) Let us not look for 'objects' as the meanings of words. Nor would this slogan exclude such words as 'God' or 'the soul'.

(ii) When presented with problematical words, look always at the discourse and behaviour in which such words are set.

(iii) In particular, let us be alert to the empirical grounding of this discourse.[21]

1.2 Empiricist Theories of Language

Having traced out, in however rough a fashion, the refining of an empiricist theory of meaning to the point where Ramsey chooses to meet it, we will now attempt the same with the closely related theme of language. This will involve a covering of much the same ground, with an eye this time to what is more importantly characteristic of contemporary empiricism. As before, however, our purpose will be served if we can succeed in making more explicit the background against which Ramsey works, and out of which he draws both his ideas and his problems. This will be done by treating separately two themes, both of them emanating from Russell, one dealing with the distinction of

[21] *Ibid.*

logical and grammatical form and the other with the topic of a hierarchy of language.

1.21 Logic and Grammar

A key distinction on which Russell and subsequent philosophers of language have been insistent, is the very basic one between grammatical and logical form. Russell's celebrated Theory of Types and Theory of Descriptions are the result of a rigorous application of this distinction in the analysis of sentences that had puzzled and misled many. There is no need here to do more than recall the circumstance that it was certain mathematical and logical paradoxes that prompted Russell's analyses, and that his success in dissolving these confirmed him in the opinion that it was the logical, and not the grammatical, form of a sentence which determined its meaning. Hence the philosopher must always be alert for the very real possibility that the analysis which the grammatical form of a sentence suggests will not be the correct one. A simple example may help make this clear: the two sentences, "Peter is mortal" and "man is mortal", have the same grammatical form but an importantly different logical form. 'Peter' is the name of an individual, and 'man' the name of a class of individuals: they belong to different logical types which are not interchangeable. The first may be read as a prediction that Peter will die, whereas the second is a prediction not that man will die, but that any individual that falls within the class of men will die.

By insisting on the differences in logical type, Russell called attention away from the surface similarities of words and sentences, and alerted philosophers to the need for a careful testing of the ground before venturing forth to settle questions of meaning, and to solve problems to which such similarities give rise. This caution and sensitivity to logical distinctions disguised by grammatical form is shared by his successors, without their necessarily agreeing with the kind of analysis he proposes as the philosophical remedy. In what follows we will recall two different ways in which this line of thought has been developed. Emphasis has been placed by some on the kind of analysis proposed by Russell to serve his distinction, while others (more recently) have drawn a different lesson from the same distinction, and have preferred to accentuate the rich logical diversity displayed by language.

1.211 Carnap and Logical Syntax

Rudolph Carnap is a good instance of the first group, an early and notable contribution being The Logical Syntax of Language (1934, English 1937). The basic principle behind this approach is that for the purposes of philosophical analysis language is to be considered a calculus; the rules which govern the introduction and manipulation of the words (symbols) must be made explicit, and this logical syntax is intended to do. The way is thus barred both to those pseudo-problems which arise out of a neglect of the rules governing the different logical types, and also to any form of language whose syntax cannot be determined. The principal offenders in this latter sense are metaphysicians, and more especially theologians, who will not specify the conditions governing the truth and falsity of their assertions. Until such conditions are specified, their language is judged without a logic, without meaning—it is a pseudo-language.

1.212 'Depth Grammar' and 'Logical Behaviour'

The other approach, as already noted, develops quite a different line of thought. The emphasis on the logic as opposed to the grammar—"surface grammar"[22]—of a sentence is as great, but it leads to an inquiry into something quite different from logical syntax. What interests the later Wittgenstein, or Ryle, to mention two of the principals in this second group, is not the formal structure that a language may be given, but the form a language assumes in being used. Talk of logical syntax and of the rules governing the formation and transformation of sentences, yields to talk of the 'logical behaviour' of words, or concepts,

[22] Philosophical Investigations, #664.

as this can be discerned in the description of a language game, and in the comparison of their role or behaviour in neighbouring language games. Attention has shifted from language as a system of symbols to language as a form of behaviour, or, as Wittgenstein preferred, "a form of life". Perhaps the most important consequence of this, and certainly the point of sharpest contrast with the other approach, is the prominence given in the analysis of a language to the entire situation, of which the language in question is, as it were, only the vocal part. The peculiarities of the situation are mirrored in the language game itself and the analysis must bring this out. On this view, the analysis of a language is governed, not by the *prima facie* suggestions of its grammar, nor by the *a priori* stipulations of its prescribed logical syntax, but by the rules that can be seen to constitute the particular 'game', or the particular role it plays within a specified practical setting.

1.213 Ramsey's Conclusions

It is this latter sense of analysis that Ramsey accepts as appropriate, and as providing a necessary tool for the theologian.

> To elucidate the logical oddness that must of necessity belong to theological language; to display its logical mapping so as to show how its logical peculiarities are appropriate to the country it professes to describe—this must henceforward be a primary task of the

> philosophical theologian. So there arises the prospect of a new approach to theology which would use the methods and tools of logical empiricism rather than classical metaphysics with its traditional categories and all too detailed ontologies.[23]

The reference to 'logical mapping' need not detain us now, it will be taken up in the second half of this chapter. The phrase 'logical oddness', of which he is so fond, is meant to suggest not only that the logical analysis of theological language will differ from that which is suggested by its surface grammar, but more specifically that the analysis will exhibit the ways in which theological language is 'odd', and necessarily so. This at least is the promise implicit in Ramsey's acknowledgement of analysis, in the sense outlined, as "the primary task of the philosophical theologian".

1.22 Hierarchy of Languages

Implicit in the Theory of Types, as Russell came to realize, was a theory about the structure of language:

> The conception of a hierarchy of languages is involved in the theory of types.[24]

One way of understanding this, a way which Ramsey favours, is to say that corresponding to the different logical types there are distinct levels of language. This may be taken as another way of saying that although it is gram-

[23] 1956:1, "Empiricism and Religion . . .", p. 162.

[24] B. Russell, An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth (1940), p. 62.

matically possible to substitute a word of one logical type for that of another in a sentence, the logical form of that sentence is thereby changed. A difference in logical type calls for a difference in analysis. For example, if we substitute 'man (= the species) has a headache' for 'Jones has a headache', the logical character of the sentence has clearly changed, and if it is to admit of analysis at all it must be as a wholly different kind of sentence, on a different (higher) level of language. This is the direction in which, as we will see, Ramsey tries to turn Russell's suggestion about a hierarchy of languages, but Russell himself intended something rather different.

Essentially, the hierarchy of languages was conceived by Russell as a possible solution to the problem set by Wittgenstein's doctrine of 'the mystical' in the Tractatus:

> There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They make themselves manifest. They are what is mystical. (6.522)

Wittgenstein denied the possibility that we can say anything about the structure of language: it can only be shown.

> A proposition shows its sense. (4.022)
>
> What can be shown, cannot be said. (4.1212)
>
> No proposition can make a statement about itself, because a propositional sign cannot be contained in itself (that is the whole of the 'theory of types'). (3.332)

Russell thought this too strong, and sought a loophole by suggesting the possibility of a hierarchy of languages:

> These difficulties suggest to my mind some such possibility as this: that every language has, as Mr. Wittgenstein says, a structure concerning which, in the language, nothing can be said, but that there may be another language dealing with the structure of the first language, and having itself a new structure, and that to this hierarchy of languages there may be no limit.[25]

As he later developed it, this theory of the hierarchy of languages proceeded on the basis of the distinction between object-words and logical words, or words used about words; the principal examples of these he gives as 'true', 'false', 'not', 'or', 'some', 'all'.

> 'Word' cannot occur in the object-language, 'object-word' can occur in the secondary language. Assuming that logical words occur in the secondary language, 'logical word' will first occur in the tertiary language. If 'tertiary words' are defined as those that occur in the tertiary language but not in the primary or secondary language, then 'tertiary word' belongs to the quaternary language. And so on. It is to be understood that each language contains all the languages of lower orders.[26]

The hierarchy of languages, then, is a purely formal matter, belonging to the logical order. It rests on object-language as its foundation, and on this ground level there are no gradations, no further levels of factual reference.

---

[25] B. Russell, Introduction to Tractatus, p. xxii. It is worth remarking, however, that Wittgenstein repudiated this Introduction by Russell, and even hesitated to have the book published on account of it, as we read in a letter dated 1920: "My book will probably not be printed, as I could not bring myself to have it published with Russell's introduction, which looks even more impossible in translation than it does in the original." Cf. P. Engelmann, Letters from Ludwig Wittgenstein, with a Memoir (1967), p. 31.

[26] An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth (1940), pp. 78-79.

> The hierarchy must extend upwards indefinitely, but not downwards, since if it did, language could never get started. There must, therefore, be a language of lowest type.[27]

We need not follow Russell any further in his development of this theory. Carnap and others have constructed their own versions of it; all of them however are in agreement in regarding their enterprise as being, to use Carnap's phrase, in 'the formal mode', on the 'meta-level' of language.

1.221 Ramsey's Reflections

Ramsey, while welcoming the insights provided by this theory into the structure of language, takes issue with its restriction to the level of 'meta-languages'. He argues that an insight into the structure of language cannot be without relevance to the structure of the world; in other words, he insists on taking the theory to be about language in a full-bodied sense—language _and_ its factual reference, or language _as used_—and not about language in the anaesthetized form preferred by logicians.

> It seems to me that linguistic analysis is so concerned with the complexities of language as to overlook the various questions of factual reference that are raised. At the beginning, Russell's view was pretty plain. There was a hierarchy of language, and we

---

[27] _Ibid_., p. 63.

> might have supposed it possible that, theoretically at any rate, a place might be found somewhere in such a hierarchy for metaphysical words. But the trouble would have occurred if we had asked what these particular words in the hierarchy meant. For the sentences in which they occurred would have had to be reduced until their factual reference was given in terms of sense data. While there was a hierarchy of language, there was only one brand of fact.[28]

Ramsey is confident that in the idea of a language hierarchy he has found a way to accomodate theological language and linguistic analysis. His suggestion is sophisticated to an alarming degree, and is of a kind that both empiricists and theologians might well distrust:

> Linguistic analysis to-day is in search of an ontology; it is searching for a factual reference that is other than Russell's. Here, I suggest, is the weak spot in the contemporary armour, and for that very reason is the point which for us must have very great significance. Indeed, my general answer to the challenge of contemporary philosophy is to say that while we must welcome all the logical insights into language that recent empiricism has given us, we must somehow unite these with an approach to 'facts' which is much more Bradleian than the empiricists at one time would have dared to admit.[29]

It might almost seem now that the position has been reversed, and that it is the empiricist who is being challenged, and in a sense this is true, Ramsey being in quest of a 'broader' empiricism. This is the theme we have to explore in the remainder of this, and in the following, chapter.

[28] 1952:2, "The Challenge . . .", p. 258.

[29] *Ibid*., p. 259.

2. The Makings of a Response

It should be clear that the preceding sketch of what Ramsey chooses to call 'the challenge of contemporary empiricism' may equally well be taken as a sketch of the task which he sees himself as having been set by contemporary developments in philosophy.

> The challenge the falsification problem makes is to demand on the one hand that we establish some integral connection between theological words and the rest of language, and on the other hand that we give some account of the sort of fact to which theological words can appeal for their empirical relevance. We must discover the logical status of theological words—including, e.g., their relation to, and difference from, the words of a scientific assertion.[30]

He has said that he "wishes to give full credit to the approach and techniques of contemporary empiricism", while doing justice to "many traditional concepts, whether in metaphysics or philosophical theology" which are rejected on that approach.[31] Their rejection is due, however, to a failure of analysis, and he sees it as "an urgent task and duty" to furnish an adequate and acceptable analysis, one that will incorporate all that he approves of in contemporary empiricism, turning this to the advantage of theological language.[32] In the first place, the logical oddness of this kind of language is taken as a welcome indication of the need to proceed with care in its analysis; and the rules of the analysis are no longer set a priori by a paradigm taken from the natural sciences, but are elicited from the living situation with which the language in question is organically one. Ramsey will have much to say along these lines about the typically religious situation, insisting that this must always be prominently featured in any analysis of its language. There is, however, a stage prior to this in his response. Besides the broad question of the empirical relevance, or empirical anchorage, of religious language, there is the more specifically linguistic question of how continuous, if at all, the religious use of language is with other uses, philosophical, scientific, 'ordinary'.

---

[30] *Ibid*., p. 258.

[31] 1960:2, *Freedom and Immortality*, p. 12.

[32] 1957:1, *Religious Language*, p. 14.

Ramsey's work, we may remind ourselves again, is to be understood against a background which he himself has sketched out for us, and which he has permitted to prescribe his task for him.

> The whole movement of contemporary philosophy might be said to be characterized by (a) a preoccupation with language that has questioned in many different ways the status of metaphysical and theological words, and (b) a concern to give all propositions some empirical relevance. To face the challenge which contemporary philosophy makes on us we must (a) justify a position for theological words on a language map, and (b) in particular elucidate their empirical relevance.[33]

We will examine these two related tasks in turn. In this

[33] 1952:2, "The Challenge . . .", p. 259.

section our main interest will be taken up with his attempt to 'map' theological and metaphysical words, leading up to the larger question of their empirical basis, a question which will provide the subject for the following chapter.

2.1 Mapping Theological Language

To begin with, we must attempt to clarify what he means by a 'language map', and ask how this sits with the other model of a 'language hierarchy'; in addition there will be occasion to ask how compatible either of these models is with the emphasis he purports to give to the 'live situation' in which language is used. It is by way of considering these questions that we will come to see the role, and the place, that he would accord to metaphysical and theological language; we may also hope to see what he thinks metaphysics and theology have in common, and in what respects they differ.

2.11 The Concept of a Language Map

It seems to have been Ryle, in The Concept of Mind, who popularized the image of 'logical geography', mapwork "to determine the logical cross-bearings of concepts", and the like.[34] Ramsey, in his Inaugural Lecture on "Miracles", subtitled "an Exercise in Logical Mapwork", makes tolerably clear what he means by it.

---

[34] G. Ryle, The Concept of Mind (1949), pp. 7, 8.

> To construct an ordinary map is to express schematically the geographical setting of towns and villages in terms of the symbols for hills and rivers, roads and railways. Working with this analogy we may say that logical mapwork is somewhat similarly concerned to exhibit the propositional settings in which concepts are set, to exhibit the linguistic context in which the particular concept-sentences have their place. In this lecture we are to be concerned especially with the concept of miracle and we shall explicate its propositional setting as we might explain where a town was by giving its context of hills and rivers, roads and railways.[35]

Explicating a concept like that of 'miracle', then, is compared to the plotting of a geographical position on a map, not indeed by reading off the coordinates of longitude and latitude, which are superimposed on the map, but by relating it to significant landmarks in the immediate neighbourhood. In a similar way, the mapwork which Ramsey intends will not be done by reading off the logical coördinates, as it were, of the concept in question, but by attempting to place it in terms of other, more easily recognized features of the language map. The former way, which he admits would be "a much more usual sort of exercise in logical mapwork" would consist in an examination of "various sorts of miracle-sentence to see wherein lie their logical peculiarities and syntactical interest".[36] His preference, however, is for work on a larger scale and of a kind that will contribute to a discussion of much wider import:

[35] 1952:1, "Miracles . . .", p. 2.

[36] Ibid.

> Rather shall we examine the broad features of one or two language maps, to see whether a place can be found on any of them for the town 'miracle'.[37]

His reasons for this preference may be briefly noticed here as indications of the scope accorded such mapwork and the large philosophical claims made on the strength of it. On the one hand, the attempt to plot the position of the concept 'miracle' on maps of wide range turns the discussion to the theme of different language maps, and the possibility of these being brought together as sections of one total, or comprehensive language map. At the same time, this style of treatment, he thinks, has the salutary effect of preventing the discussion from concentrating on questions of logic to the neglect of the corresponding questions of fact. Talk of different language maps leads of itself to talk of the different features of the world to which our attention is called by these maps.

Remarks such as these stand in great need of clarification, and to this we may now turn.

2.12 Levels of Language, Different Language Maps

We are familiar with the topic of levels of language from the first section of this chapter. What remains to be done here is to connect it with talk of language maps, and to follow Ramsey's development of it as a tool of analysis. The two images of 'language maps' and 'language levels' do not naturally go together, yet Ramsey seems to experience no difficulty in maintaining them in partnership:

---

[37] *Ibid*.

> A language map which aims at adequacy and comprehensiveness must contain words used at many different 'levels'.[38]

What has to be noticed here is that he speaks not just of a language map, but of one which aims at being comprehensive, and not just of language levels, but of "words used at many different levels". Ultimately what we have to deal with is his notion of a comprehensive language (conceived on the model now of a map and now of a hierarchy), a 'total' language which is enabled to be comprehensive in virtue of certain words which provide the links, or continuity, between the different levels or different maps. Before taking up this question, however, we must attempt to clarify his terminology.

We have already had occasion to notice two quite distinct though related uses of the phrase 'language map', but since we did not explicitly advert to them it will be wise to do so now.

(a) In his lecture on Miracles he referred to "different language maps", giving as instances "the languages of science and history"; and as a further development of this he raised the possibility of merging these to form "one comprehensive language map" which would link these together. Here we have progression from specific, or partial, 'language maps' to a 'total' or comprehensive 'language map', much as we would expect regional maps to merge and find their proper place on a map of the whole country or continent. Particular languages being particular ways of mapping, or of giving prominence to, different features of reality, a comprehensive language map would bring these into correlation with each other while portraying the structure of the whole. The idea of a total language map in this sense, then, is parasitic on the model of particular language maps.

---

[38] 1952:2, "The Challenge . . .", p. 259.

(b) This being so, it is somewhat puzzling at first to find this order reversed when he introduces the 'levels' metaphor. He takes as his starting point in this second instance the idea of a total language map, and argues that this requires the differentiation of language into different levels.

> A language map which aims at adequacy and comprehensiveness must contain words used at many different 'levels'.[39]

He goes on to speak of these different 'levels' in a way which strongly suggests that there is no material difference between them and the different 'language maps' already noticed, except that these now seem to bear a different relationship to the model of a 'total language map'.

---

[39] *Ibid.*

> Words used like this, at different levels, make up what we may call (for a reason to be seen presently) the 'subordinate languages' of any total language map, e.g. the language of mathematics, of the sciences, of history, of ethics, and of highly generalized philosophical discussion, indeed all the languages of discursive knowledge in general.[40]

Is there a conflict here or not?

We have already remarked that in one use of the phrase there is no material difference between 'different levels of language' and 'different language maps'. The question that remains concerns the connection between the comprehensive character of the total language map and the requirement that language be 'many-levelled'. In another way of putting it, this is a question about the relation between talk about 'a total language' and talk about a 'hierarchy of languages' or 'the hierarchical structure of a total language'. Having been brought to the threshold of this key concept we must now try to cross it.

2.13 Total Language Map, Hierarchy of Languages

The important assumption that gives substance to these images is that any given language, whether considered as a particular map or on a certain level, is incomplete and has to be brought into relation with neighbouring maps or levels. In another way of expressing this, one language map differs from another—is on another level—because it concerns itself with different features of reality, but

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 260.

unless there is some means of integrating the whole, of bringing the pieces together, the undoubted gains in precision will be self-defeating. Consequently, to understand the concept of a total language map, or of a language hierarchy in which the levels are inter-connected, we must first examine this assumption more closely.

We may begin by noticing that the models of a total map and of a hierarchy of language are both, in Ramsey's way of conceiving them, generative of parallels supporting the assumption. Once admit a hierarchy of levels in language, or a diversity of language maps, and the way is open to argue a complexity in reality to which this complexity in language is witness, and to which no particular language map or level can do justice.

> Different maps display different pictures of the countryside—each language, scientific or historical, for example, displays its own brand of 'facts'. The countryside we live in, however, is never exhausted by any one map or any number of them. Somehow it combines and includes all the facts which each map in its way characteristically portrays, and is more.[41]

We may postpone considering what is meant by this 'more' on which he so often insists. What is immediately to our purpose is to enquire into the reasons he gives to support the suggestion that particular kinds of language, like special maps, need completion in a larger frame of reference.

---

[41] 1952:1 "Miracles . . .", p. 3.

2.131 The Language of Science is Incomplete

If any language could claim to be complete in its own right and perfectly autonomous, it would surely be the language of science. Indeed such a claim is a very familiar one. Ramsey notes two basic characteristics of scientific language which seem eminently suited to lend support to this claim.

(a) In the first place it is capable of indefinite expansion.

> Science begins from a certain make-believe, and hazards the verbal recommendations it does, in relation to a few features selected from a given situation. It trusts that, in the generalization that results, all relevant features of future situations have been selected and described. It takes a risk.[42]

From such a simple beginning, the scientist's task is to develop—and adjust—the generalization in such a manner that it will come to embrace an increasing number of increasingly diverse situations, as, in one familiar example, the case of naturally falling bodies, the movement of the tides, and the orbiting of planets.[43]

(b) Such powers of generalization, though considerable, are not sufficient. Besides increased generality there may be required what can be called intensive coverage, ever more refined and precise, taking account of the microphysical and sub-atomic level together with the initial, macrophysical level.

---

[42] *Ibid*., p. 4.

[43] 1961:1 "Religion and Science . . .", p. 81.

> The next stage in scientific language would be reached when a variety of sentences relating to boiling water at different temperatures and pressures were all united by some sort of hypothesis worked, say, in terms of atomic particles in perpetual motion. But science would not finish there. Sub-atomic phenomena, which necessitate our talking, for example, about 'heavy water', would demand that at some stage the crude atomic hypothesis is in toto set aside and some new (say) electron hypothesis devised, with all the previous coverage and more, but at the cost of a more abstract level. In such a way as this, to take a different example, phlogiston theories, oxygen theories, and electron theories have been related in succession to the facts of combustion.[44]

In this way it seems that scientific language is equipped with all the tricks that are needed to map the universe:

> Simple scientific sentences by what we may call their expansibility and hypotheses by their convertibility are all developed with one aim: towards a comprehensive language dealing with uniformities and repeated patterns.[45]

Yet Ramsey hesitates. Granting the permanent possibility of growth, he questions whether this is enough:

> Can such a language scheme, with the permanent possibility of growth by these features of expansibility and convertibility, ever be by itself totally adequate as a language map? Certainly it can succeed in becoming progressively more and more comprehensive as each modification is made. But must there not always be something which its language does not, and cannot express?[46]

[44] 1952:1, "Miracles . . .", p. 5.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid., pp. 5-6.

What support can he bring to these doubts and this suggestion?

In answer to his own question he lists "two permanent limitations on scientific language". On the one hand it will be incomplete, because "the facts themselves will always be inexhaustible", and because the questions to which scientific inquiry gives rise lead "ultimately beyond it, to what have been called 'the limiting questions' of science, indicating that the language system of science can never be closed".[47] On the other hand, because of its necessarily selective technique, it can only provide a partial, not a totally comprehensive, map of the universe. Beginning with the "positive exclusion of certain features", it proceeds indeed to the inclusion of more and more situations sharing common features, but

> always at the cost of moving to more and more abstract levels. The gain in scientific coverage, which comes from expansibility and convertibility, seems always to be at the expense of increased abstraction—saying less and less about that part of a concrete situation with and from which a beginning was made, in order to say more and more about the concrete totality of facts over which scientific language is farther and farther extended.[48]

Neither of these reasons is of itself very compelling, but they do suggest an appropriate line of inquiry. Given these limitations, what kind of comprehensive map could science claim to provide? The loss of particularity is inevitable, and Ramsey considers this a serious defect. Setting this aside for the moment, however, does the scientific method not bid fair to embrace the universe in a way that no other kind of inquiry can? To this Ramsey has two rejoinders, one concerning the great diversity of 'sciences', which raised questions about the unity, and therefore about the comprehensiveness, of a 'scientific' interpretative scheme; the other calls attention to a limitation of the scientific method itself, which necessarily tailors its claim to comprehensiveness.

---

[47] *Ibid*, p. 6.

[48] *Ibid*.

2.1311 The Fragmentation of Science

The kind of unity for which Ramsey looks amid the diversity of 'sciences' is quite different from that proposed by the Physicalists. He is concerned not to reduce all to one, but out of all of their contributions to construct a complete map. For this reason he considers the most significant work being done in science is that which brings different 'sciences' together in a common inquiry.

> Clearly it is the ultimate hope of scientific language somehow to construct one picture—to link together the various pictures provided by the various 'sciences'. Hence, the most exciting and far-reaching scientific work is precisely that which is done in mixed fields, for example, to do with brain-potentials (uniting physics and physiology), or in an earlier day with the electronic theory of valency (uniting physics and chemistry).[49]

---

[49] *Ibid*., p. 7.

Even within the bounds of, let us say, the language of physics, the same tendency toward the integration of its concepts is evident.

> What were traditionally such logically diverse areas as light, heat and magnetism and electricity, for example, have been integrated by concepts such as mass, velocity, energy.[50]

But now we must note with Ramsey that although the intentions of the scientific community may be to work towards the unity of an interpretative scheme, its performance falls short of it, and this of necessity. What it produces in the way of a new integrated language

> is an alternative to, and does not incorporate, the former disintegrated and separate languages. Rather it talks in another kind of way altogether about what hitherto needed two different languages for discussion, and what that was is never given except in terms of the ordinary language from which we started. . . . At any rate, such increased integration as is provided by scientific generalization leaves many diverse, and in some way still indispensable, languages strewn about the path of progress. Integration done by the sciences is not at all a matter of integrating diverse languages; rather does it consist of replacing diversity by more generalized and less diverse schemes.[51]

Perhaps his point is clear, without need for further illustration. Scientific language is incomplete because while it aims at comprehensiveness it fails to achieve it, being unable to transcend the diversity of its many approaches and, by the same method that produced this variety, educe unity from it. Another kind of language scheme is required for this.

---

[50] 1961:2 Prospect . . ., p. 161.

[51] Ibid.

2.1312 The Limitations of Scientific Method

In addition to this limitation of the scientific language map, and connected with it, is the limitation which he attributes to the scientific method. This may be briefly stated here, as it is a claim that will be argued more closely in the following chapter; it has indeed been implicit in much of the previous discussion. In the first place, scientific method can recognize only that which is in principle observable, whereas it is Ramsey's contention

> not only that there is no sacrosanct class of data to be called 'observable facts', but that not even all functions of 'observable facts' exhaust that of which we have awareness.[52]

The second point to be made follows directly on this last remark. Although obviously "closely associated with the facts" science is "not bound rigidly" to them; it could not be science if it were.[53] It ventures beyond factual detail to ever greater and more powerful generalizations, which are first hazarded in "moments of vision", or what he prefers to call "disclosures".[54] It is in such "disclosure situations" that those insights are born which make the pur-

[52] 1952:1 "Miracles . . .", p. 3.

[53] 1961:1, "Religion and Science . . .", p. 79.

[54] Ibid., p. 81.

suit of science possible and which play an increasingly important role in its development. It is in these same disclosure situations that we become aware of much that remains unmapped on the most ambitious charts of science.

> For what exceeds the language of science are the very disclosures which scientific method itself demands, and which become the more prominent, and their logical status the clearer, as scientific method proceeds.[55]

2.132 Conclusions

Ramsey has argued that the language maps prepared by science aim indeed at being comprehensive but are of necessity incomplete. On the one hand his argument was that a different kind of language scheme was needed to integrate the various maps carefully prepared by scientific inquiries, and on the other hand he suggested that there was more to reality than the methods of science were capable, in principle, of netting. Further discussion of his proposals on the latter point were postponed to the following chapter. What remains to be done here is to review his suggestion that it is the task of metaphysics to point up the linking words or concepts which function as integrators, and make of the many different language schemes a total, complete and comprehensive, one.

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 88.

2.14 Metaphysics and the Total Map

The details of Ramsey's argument may have given trouble, but its drift has been plain enough. The desire to comprehend the universe, to bring all our knowledge together into a unified picture cannot be achieved by the mere juxtaposition of the many different language maps found to be necessary. What is needed is not another language _map_, but a language whose function it is to link the many maps or levels, to exhibit the importance of certain words which run like a thread through all uses of language, making them one in Ramsey's sense of providing the clues needed for their integration. Such a language, or language scheme, is what Ramsey understands by Metaphysics.

2.141 Index Words

It has been Ramsey's argument that the more a scientific scheme tries to be comprehensive, the more evident becomes its need of what he likes to call a 'metaphysical supplement'.

> . . . the very _scientific_ language likely to be the _best_ co-ordinator is naturally that whose factual reference is most abstract. The more scientific language finds its unity _in itself_, the more does it parody the facts it endeavours to describe. So we may reasonably suggest that both to _unite_ scientific languages at their different abstractive levels _as well as_ to give _all_ levels their factual reference, words will be wanted which lie outside all scientific languages, and which in uniting them also relate them to that _Fact_ which all the abstractive selections of scientific fact presuppose. Such a Fact we may well think demands 'metaphysical' words, at any rate words

> lying outside the logic of science, but words in which the various scientific languages find together their unity, as well as each its completion and applicability to Fact.[54]

The metaphysical words to which he makes reference are variously characterized by him as 'marginal, boundary, index, integrator, coordinating words', the cumulative suggestion of these images being that their function is to connect all languages, hence to be shared by all without belonging in the strict sense to any. None of the images he uses is in the end very satisfactory, but they do conspire to make the same point. They recommend a much more sophisticated approach to the language of metaphysics, an approach on which the task of metaphysics is seen to be primarily linguistic, and only secondarily, and in a curious sense, empirical.

The metaphysician's interest focuses on precisely those words, or concepts, which are constantly in play in every use, and at any level, of language, and which do not admit of reduction. They are words which, as we will have occasion to see in more detail later, belong to the register of typically 'first person' language. As such they underline the metaphysical importance of the language user, and of his (metaphysical) role in completing and integrating the different language maps of which he has to avail himself. In fixing attention, in this way, on first person language, and hence on the language user, Ramsey seems to have hit on a happy combination of linguistic and 'empirical' (factual) themes for a metaphysics. That he chose to present his views in the rather contrived imagery of an 'index language' need not be allowed to discourage or confuse us unnecessarily. Suffice it to note that by 'index words' he means to emphasize their peculiar relation and role with respect both to our language as a whole, and its empirical reference, again as a whole:

---

[54] 1952:1, "Miracles . . .", pp. 7-8.

> We may call them index words, and use that picture, for two reasons: (a) they are words which are good clues to, and definitive of, the total language scheme, as is the index of a book to the words contained in its chapters. (b) They are words which bring to a full level of concretion what is being talked about—which indicates the abstract in its concrete setting. They point at full concretion (cp. 'index' finger).[57]

An important characteristic of these words is their curiously ambivalent empirical status:

> Index words do not picture fact. The index as a whole has in relation to a total language the peculiar and special function we have tried to describe; and it has a correspondingly peculiar factual reference; being justified in toto by reference to the 'self-other awareness'.[58]

The reasoning hinted at here will be made more implicit presently; what is more immediately to the point is to emphasize the peculiarity of these words which "not being themselves descriptive in their use, can nevertheless be united with words which are descriptive".[59] Used in partnership with words whose reference is wholly empirical, their function is at the same time trans-empirical, providing the thread which betrays the wider and more subtle context of any language, a context of which the language user is at least as important a part as the statements he makes. As he expresses it elsewhere, these words "must occur in phrases which are entailed by all kinds of scientific assertions", yet they are not themselves native to any scientific assertion, nor do they entail any.[60] As an instance of what he means by this, we may take his discussion of the assertion 'I exist'.

---

[57] 1952:2, "The Challenge . . .", p. 261.

[58] Ibid., p. 265.

> This certainly is entailed by all kinds of scientific assertions. 'He has a heart beating', 'He has a blood count of X', 'He has a digestive system characterized by all that the bio-chemistry of fats, proteins, carbo-hydrates, and enzymes can teach us', 'He has such and such reflex actions', 'He has such and such brain potentials': 'I exist' is entailed by all these, when said of me. But 'I exist' entails none of these. We cannot necessarily deduce from 'I exist' any of these particular assertions. Yet the affirmation of my existence is that which gives all these varied assertions their concrete reference; it is that which unites them all.[61]

It is in this context that he speaks of them as 'key-words', words which give access, we might say in one way of taking the metaphor, to the full reality which scientific language cannot of itself encompass. This is their crucial role: to keep our language open to the total awareness which we have in a given situation, without being able to capture it on any one, or any number, of limited, precise language maps.

---

[59] 1961:2, Prospect . . ., p. 163.

[60] 1961:1, "Religion and Science . . .", p. 89.

[61] Ibid.

2.142 Apex Word

The linguistic emphasis in Ramsey's metaphysics becomes even more marked in his discussion of the way in which our language is ultimately confined, and one might almost say individuated, by an over-arching concept, or 'apex word'.

> The truth of every empiricist case is that, despite what we have said about 'sheer relativism', at some stage or other 'fact is given'. There is, as Whitehead would put it, a 'limitation', an 'abruptness' about the world. . . . The curious point I would like to make is this: that this limitation is really linguistic—that 'given fact' and empirical 'limitation' express rather a demand on language than describe features of the world. They are, I suggest, a demand that our overall total language shall be finite, that our language hierarchy shall have something like what Whitehead would call an apex. The empiricist appeal to given fact is rather an appeal for constraint on language which shall show itself ultimately in a pattern and structure which is finite.[62]

His candidate for this ultimate coordinating task is the word 'God':

> the word God, I would suggest, likewise belongs to the metaphysical index. Indeed it would be proferred as

---

[62] 1952:2, "The Challenge . . .", p. 261.

> the apex word which effects the final closing of the linguistic hierarchy, that word which is the ultimate coordinating word to make our total language finite, and which in particular ties up the metaphysical index.[63]

The image of an 'apex' may or may not be helpful, but it should not be allowed to obscure the logical claim he is making with respect to the role of the word 'God' in our language, a claim to which he returns often, especially in his analyses of the traditional proofs of God's existence:

> Any proposition asserting a particular word as an apex, e.g. 'God', has a unique logical status, and it is the claim of the ontological argument that 'God exists' needs to be analysed in this way, i.e. 'God exists' = '"God" is the apex word of that total language in which all "existence" is most simply, most comprehensively and most consistently talked about'.[64]

The claim that he is making here is not simply that 'God', like all metaphysical words, calls for a different kind of analysis than that given 'descriptive' or 'object' words, but that it is unique. Yet it does have an analogue in the word 'I', on which indeed he says that it is modelled, and he instances the same curious "fact" of "self-other awareness", the same kind of (disclosure) situation, as the "empirical anchorage" of both metaphysics and theology.[65] It is this connection which is important and in need of further exploration; the unwieldy imagery of maps, hierarchies, index words, and the like, does not compare in importance, and is in the end dispensable.

---

[63] Ibid., p. 264.

[64] Ibid., p. 267.

[65] 1954:1, "Christianity and Language", p. 339. 1961:2, Prospect . . ., pp. 163, 173.

2.143 Metaphysics and Theology

What we have noted thus far in Ramsey's remarks about metaphysics has brought us to the point where we can understand his tendency to connect metaphysics and theology as naturally as he does. The recognition that scientific—'empirical'—knowledge is not adequate to our total awareness is the recognition of our need, and of the empirical basis, for metaphysical words.

> Metaphysical words are more than a pious jingle of 'regulative' words, because they are that part of a language system whose empirical necessity arises from the fact that experience is not exhaustively described in terms of any number of parts which are 'objective' in any number of senses. The ultimate justification of metaphysical words lies in the fact that there is a non-inferential awareness more concrete than the observable facts which characterize it abstractly and objectively. Metaphysical words are, then, related in a curious way to the residue; and any total language map relates at once to the concrete non-inferential awareness and to the 'data' which are abstractively discernible. Further, if what we have said is true, it is clear then that 'I' and 'person' are metaphysical words in our sense.[66]

The "non-inferential awareness" to which he refers here, and often, as "more concrete than cognition",[67] is his prescription for the broader empiricism which he favours, and which he thinks is not only compatible with, but is a sound

[66] 1952:1, "Miracles . . .", p. 21.

[67] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

foundation for, metaphysical and theological thinking. The two coalesce in his mind to form a metaphysical theology, which represents for him the high point ('the apex') of what he also wants to call an 'empirical metaphysics'. It is clear that much, if not all, rides on his ability to recommend this broader empiricism, based on a concept of experience comprising 'non-inferential awareness' or 'disclosures'. In the following chapter we will attempt to unravel his thinking along these lines. Suffice it to note here, in conclusion, the way in which the case for theology and the case for metaphysics are both argued on the same grounds.

The case for metaphysics rests on the need to expand the concept of experience to accomodate the distinctive logical peculiarity of first person language, and especially to give prominence to the neglected, because problematic, level of active involvement in experience.

> I suggest that without in any way rejecting empirical insights we may do more justice to metaphysics: (1) by taking more seriously and more critically Wittgenstein's doctrine that language is inseparable from "the actions into which it is woven" (PI #7). Let us ask ourselves just what sort of language is apt currency for our own activity. (2) by recalling that Wittgenstein was haunted by the double use of 'I' which he found in ordinary discourse. The one seems plainly descriptive; the other seems logically peculiar.[68]

The case for metaphysical theology rests on the claim that

---

[68] 1960:1, "Contemporary Empiricism . . .", p. 182.

'God' can be modelled on 'I', that

> the logical behaviour of 'I', being grounded in a disclosure and ultimately different from all descriptive language, while nevertheless being associated with it, is always a good first clue to the logical behaviour of 'God'.[69]

The extent to which he is disposed to develop this proposed parallel is worth noting:

> Further, with reference to the unifying character of metaphysical language, just as 'I' acts (as we saw) as an integrator word for all kinds of scientific and other descriptive assertions about myself, 'I exist' being a sort of contextual presupposition for them all, so also may 'God' be regarded as a contextual presupposition for the Universe. 'I am active' is entailed by all kinds of scientific descriptions and links them together. Likewise, we might say, and certainly as a first move, 'God is active' links any and all descriptive assertions about the Universe, such as science in particular specializes in.[70]

Bound up with the suggestion that the logic of metaphysical and theological language is the same, is its empirical counterpart, which is that their justification in terms of a revised concept of 'experience' is likewise the same.

> The possibility of theology being given an appropriate empirical anchorage depends on its being related to what is objectively given in some such disclosure situation as that in which (subjectively) I become aware of myself. Nor can such situations *ex hypothesi* be wholly described in terms of observables, or they would cease to be transcendent, and our subjectivity would be objectified. My suggestion is that to understand theological language, we must relate it to situations such as these which break in on us, when the straightforward assertions of ordinary language are grouped together in a particular way. The paradigm

---

[69] 1961:2, *Prospect* . . ., pp. 173-174.

[70] *Ibid*., p. 174.

> for any theological assertion is the kind of assertion we make about ourselves when we realize ourselves as active in a 'disclosure' which occurs around an enumeration of the observable elements of our public behaviour.[71]

On this presentation of his views there scarcely seems to be any difference worth making between metaphysics and theology. Yet much of his later discussion of theology is of specifically Christian, or revealed theology, which cannot be said to be simply the same as metaphysical or philosophical theology. It will be important in the end to determine the extent to which he is successful in keeping this difference clear, while continuing to invoke "disclosure situations" as "the paradigm for any theological assertion". Closely related to this is the question of the relation obtaining between metaphysics, theology and religion, as we will have occasion to notice, yet at important points in his discussion he seems also to regard them as interchangeable. The 'disclosure situation' is proposed not only as a theological, but also as a religious paradigm:

> Therefore 'I am I', grounded in, and currency for the subjective constituent of a disclosure which occurs around a never-ending series of verifiable descriptive criteria, is a religious paradigm. Here is a subjective transcendence, and a religious situation is one where such a subjective transcendence occurs along with and as a response to objective transcendence.[72]

---

[71] 1960:1, "Contemporary Empiricism . . .", p. 182. Cf. 1961:2, Prospect . . ., p. 174.

[72] Unpublished notes, Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion, pp. 8-9.

In this connection, too, he speaks of the empirical basis for, not theology, but religion—suggesting that they are one and the same.[73] Finally, it is worth noting that 'worship', which is definitely a religious and only secondarily a theological category, is characterized by him as "the compact name" or "the ordinary word" for what he elsewhere cites as the empirical ground for metaphysics and theology:

> It is, indeed, in worship that we use, and justifiably, the index word 'God'—the apex word which brings 'unity' to our metaphysical system. For 'worship' is the ordinary word for describing the 'self-other awareness' we have mentioned so frequently.[74]

It is clear that in this concept of self-other, non-inferential awareness—the concept, really of disclosure situation—we may expect to find in germ all the necessary elements of Ramsey's thinking on these questions, as well as the advantages to be gained by, and the obstacles to be met with in, his proposed marriage of empiricism and theology.

> Contemporary empiricism, broadened to include 'disclosures', introduces a more generous account of rationality, endeavours to map mystery, and displays a deliberate concern for the empirical basis of the Christian faith as expressed in its language of Bible, doctrine, and liturgy knit with appropriate activity.[75]

This, at least, is the claim we now have to examine.

---

[73] *Ibid.*

[74] 1952:2, "The Challenge . . .", p. 269. Cf. 1952:1, "Miracles . . .", p. 29.

[75] 1960:1, "Contemporary Empiricism . . .", p. 184.

Chapter II: The Concept of a Disclosure Situation

page
1. Experience 58
1.1 Experience as 'duality-in-unity' 59
1.11 F. H. Bradley. 60
1.12 James Ward 62
1.2 Experience as 'active encounter' 67
1.21 Primacy of Conation. 69
1.3 Berkeley: Notions and Ideas 72
1.31 First Person Language is 'logically odd' . . . 75
1.311 Hume's Statement of the Problem. 75
1.312 Critique of Ryle 78
1.313 Critique of Ayer 83
1.32 The Metaphysical Significance of Subjective Awareness. 85
1.4 Summary and Conclusions. 91

2. Disclosure Situation 93

2.1 Disclosure: Discernment and Commitment. . . . 96
2.2 Disclosure and Evidence. 97
2.3 Recognition of the Transcendent. 99
2.4 Criteria of Objectivity. 104

CHAPTER II

THE CONCEPT OF A DISCLOSURE SITUATION

In this chapter the attempt will be made to situate Ramsey's empiricism. More particularly, we will try to notice to whom he is indebted for the views he adopts and develops, hoping in this way to come to a better understanding of what he means by a 'disclosure situation'. The inquiry may best proceed in two stages. The basic starting point will be the concept of experience which lies at the heart of the empiricism he favours. In the elaboration of this we will find him, not unexpectedly, characterizing it in ways which put the main emphasis on the concrete level of personal, active participation or engagement in experience. It is from this all important concept of experience that he develops his contextual style of analysis, in which the complexity of a concrete situation is considered the only adequate point of reference for empirical analysis. Consequently, if we first attempt to share his conception of experience, we will be better able to appreciate both the meaning and importance of what he calls a 'disclosure situation'.

1. Experience

A recurrent theme of Ramsey's early writing, and one which receives equal attention though somewhat different expression in his later work, is the inadequacy of a commonly accepted understanding of experience. The main burden of his criticism is that the emphasis in too many discussions has fallen on different aspects of experience to the consequent neglect and distortion of the whole; in particular, he takes issue with the classical empiricist tendency to restrict experience to what are its objective and passive aspects. In the elaboration of a more adequate account of experience we will find him drawing on the thought of, surprisingly enough, both Bradley and James Ward, and of Berkeley more than any other.

1.1 Experience as 'duality-in-unity'

An early statement of what Ramsey understands by experience is to be found in a paper he read to the tenth International Congress of Philosophy in 1948.

> I would first urge that all experience is an Encounter, as having two fundamental and complementary features: while involving a duality it is also a unity. To stress the unity is to avoid the Cartesian separatism which led to the inadequate epistemology of Locke and Hume; to accept the duality is to admit the fundamental truth in the Cartesian position. There is, in the unity of experience, always 'self' and 'not-self'; experiences are always 'owned', and they are always 'of' something.[1]

What is especially to be noticed here is his determination to maintain in full view both the unity, which comes of stressing the subjective pole (experience as 'mine'), and

[1] 1948:1. "Man and Religion . . .", p. 309.

the duality, which results from emphasizing the objective pole (the objects of experience as independent of my experiencing them). His use of the word 'encounter' is an important clue to his thinking here; but before exploring this it will be advisable to consider a little more closely what lies behind his concern to maintain the claims of duality and unity in fruitful tension. We will find him bent on retaining Bradley's stress on the unity of experience, while accepting Ward's criticism of the philosophical position developed by Bradley on that basis.

> Whatever else experience might be, it is a unity of the observer and the observed; and while Ward was right against Bradley in his assertion that nevertheless this unity was characterized by a duality, yet it remains true that experience is always a duality-in-unity and justice must be done to both features. Experience is a two-sided transaction: it is always owned and it is always 'of' something. Experience cannot adequately be analysed in terms of either its subjective or objective constituents alone.[2]

The opacity of these remarks may be alleviated by a brief review both of Bradley's view of experience and of Ward's criticism of it.

1.11 F. H. Bradley

Bradley's insistence on the unity, or non-relational 'immediacy' of experience is well known. In his terminology 'experience', 'awareness' and 'feeling' are interchangeable, and are not to be confused with 'consciousness', which is derivative. In consciousness there is distinction of subject and object; indeed he takes this to be of the essence of consciousness: "the being of an object for a subject".[3] Such a distinction, however, is an intermediate stage between what he calls Immediate and Absolute Experience, each of which is a non-relational totality. We need not pursue Bradley's thought beyond the point where we are able to grasp, or at least glimpse, the reasons for his emphasis on the unity of experience, and this can perhaps be done most simply by attempting to draw out the distinction he makes between 'experience' and 'consciousness'.

---

[2] 1949:1, "Some Reflections . . .", pp. 296-297.

> Consciousness, to my mind, is not original. What comes first in each of us is rather feeling, a state as yet without either an object or subject. Feeling here naturally does not mean mere pleasure or pain. . . . Feeling is immediate experience without distinction or relation in itself. It is a unity, complex but without relations. And there is here no difference between the state and its content, since, in a word, the experienced and the experience are one. And a distinction between cognition and other aspects of our nature is not yet developed. Feeling is not one differentiated aspect, but holds all aspects in one.[4]

Perhaps what Bradley is after here can be stated in this way. Consciousness is that stage in the development of our awareness where subjective and objective aspects of the whole are held apart and the distinction is maintained in sharp focus. It is, however, only a stage and the distinction or correlation of subject and object no more than an abstraction whose purpose is, we may say, to articulate the complexity of reality without betraying its underlying unity.

---

[3] Bradley, Essays on Truth and Reality (1914), p. 192.

[4] Bradley, p. 194.

> . . . For me at no stage of mental development is the mere correlation of subject and object actually given. Wherever this or any other relation is experienced, what is experienced is more than the mere relation. It involves a felt totality, and on this inclusive unity the relation depends. The subject, the object, and their relation, are experienced as elements or aspects in a One which is there from the first. And thus to seek to extrude the One from what at first is experienced, is in every case to mistake for fact what really is sheer abstraction.[5]

The distinction between consciousness and experience, on which Bradley insists against Ward, does make possible some appreciation of what Bradley was intent on emphasizing. While not denying the subject-object duality, characteristic of consciousness, he sought to fix attention on "the felt totality" which, so it seemed to him, was our basic and perduring experience of reality. The formidable difficulties of articulating this "felt unity" in experience—evident enough in Bradley's own attempts to do so—may suggest the need for a less emphatic contrast between 'unity' and 'duality'. This indeed is what Ramsey proposes, as he suggests a rapprochement between Bradley and Ward.

1.12 James Ward

In his criticism of Bradley, Ward stands firmly by the centrality of the subject and his consciousness in any experience. Obscure hints of a more basic pre-conscious and post-conscious 'awareness' cannot weigh against this, nor can they distract from the central importance of the dual characteristic of consciousness.

---

[5] Bradley, p. 200.

> Self-consciousness being our locus standi we are led to regard the duality of subject and object as the essential characteristic of experience. It follows then that we cannot recognize either Bradley's immediate experience or his absolute Experience as actual at all: like zero and infinity they are simply limits.[6]

Yet Ward himself is dissatisfied with the term 'consciousness' and, like Bradley but for wholly different reasons, considers 'experience' a more appropriate term. He will not concede to Bradley that the duality which characterizes consciousness is in any way mitigated, let alone transcended, in experience. Bradley's preference, we saw, for 'experience' over 'consciousness' is explained by his conviction that the distinction of subject and object is an intermediate phase, preceded and followed by the "experience" of "felt totality and . . . inclusive unity".[7] Ward's reasons for the same terminological preference are in the sharpest possible contrast to this. He shies away from 'consciousness' because he regards it as a Cartesian trap, luring one into "the errors of intellectualism" and of typically Cartesian dualism; 'experience', and indeed, 'individual experience', is the more apt term for psychical life:

---

[6] Ward, "Bradley's Doctrine of Experience", Mind, NS 34 (1925), p. 31.

[7] Bradley, Essays in Truth and Reality, p. 200.

> Psychologically regarded, the sole function of perception and intellection is, it is contended, to guide action and subserve volition—more generally to promote self-conservation and betterment. For psychical life so regarded, 'experience' is the obvious term, and the term which in our ordinary affairs is the one usually employed. But in psychology the far less appropriate term 'consciousness' holds the field, and its manifold ambiguities are something of a scandal. It is continually confused with self-consciousness, which was its original meaning; and thereby the errors of intellectualism . . . are apt to be perpetuated and a part of experience mistaken for the whole.[8]

Here is the most important point of difference, and perhaps also of misunderstanding, between Ward and Bradley: one writes as a psychologist, the other as a metaphysician. Bradley proceeds from the conviction that his starting point, as a metaphysician, must be 'the One', and that the duality characteristic of consciousness cannot be original, since if it is there will be no possibility of reducing it:

> If what is given is a Many without a One, the One is never attainable. And, if what we had at first were the mere correlation of subject and object, then to rise beyond that would be impossible.[9]

This line of reasoning cuts no ice with Ward; as a psychologist, he is more interested in 'the facts' of psychical life than in the dilemmas that torment the abstraction prone mind of a metaphysician. 'Consciousness' is a misleading term, not because it entrenches an undesirable duality, but because it misrepresents psychical life as essentially intellectual and cognitive, whereas

---

[8] Ward, Psychological Principles (1920), p. 21.

[9] Bradley, Essays in Truth and Reality, p. 199.

> in the present day psychologists are beginning more and more generally to insist that not intellect but will, not cognition but conation, not sensitivity but activity, is the clue to a true understanding of the character and development of experience.[10]

Needless to say, this understanding of experience as

> not merely, not primarily cognition, but also, and above all, conative activity or behaviour,[11]

is not without important philosophical, and metaphysical, implications. We will see these developed by Ramsey as he explicates experience in terms of 'active encounter', and argues the need for empiricism to adjust its method of analysis to accomodate the primacy given to 'activity' over 'sensitivity', a theme he takes up in Berkeley.

The point here is not to take sides in the discussion between Ward and Bradley, but to see what Ramsey is getting at when he credits each with an important insight about 'experience'. He takes Ward's side against Bradley on the question of duality, which, however, in Ward's mind and in Ramsey's, is opposed not to the Unity championed by Bradley, but to the dualism that is a Cartesian legacy in both rationalism and empiricism.

[10] Ward, Psychological Principles, p. 20.

[11] Ibid., p. 28.

> The psychologist must maintain that no experience is merely subjective. But epistemologists who nevertheless . . . describe individual experience as subjective—because of its particularity . . . —confine the term 'objective' to universal experience, the objects of which are the same for every experient. And so has arisen the time-honoured opposition of Sense-knowledge and Thought-knowledge: so too has arisen the dualism of Empiricism and Rationalism, which Kant sought to surmount by logical analysis.[12]

It is true, Ward does attack Bradley's Unity, but we should note that what he opposes to it is not 'duality' but 'duality in unity'.

> Interpreting experience as a duality in unity we should say that the correlation of subject and object in experience exists always; but Bradley's view seems to be that only when immediate experience is, in fact, transcended, does this correlation, in fact, arise.[13]

The qualification of duality in this way is of the first importance, since it concedes to Bradley an essential unity in experience, even if it is complex rather than simple. The unity on which Bradley insisted was contrasted too sharply with the duality of subject and object on which all language, and indeed all experience, seemed to turn. Ward's understanding of the unity to be found in experience is better suited to experience as we in fact know it; and it is a unity located in the lived and active dimension of experience—which is surely the dimension to which Bradley was trying to do justice when he stressed "the felt wholeness" of "immediate experience".

---

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

[13] Ward, "Bradley's Doctrine of Experience", *Mind*, NS 34 (1925), p. 26.

> The recognition of the inseparability of subject and object in experience, which was a cardinal doctrine with Kant, has helped too to bring the mind theory into line with the life theory; but in place of the life of body, organic life, we have now the life of mind, psychical life. But mind here properly denotes the subject of experience, the Ego—as we sometimes say—in contradistinction to the Non-Ego or object of experience; and mental life is tantamount to experience as the interaction of the two.[14]

This aspect of experience will now be examined in the section that follows.

1.2 Experience as 'active encounter'

Ward spoke of experience as "the interaction of Ego and non-Ego" and insisted that there was a "double activity" involved, "a certain rapport between giver and receiver" which is quite definitely a fact about experience of which most analyses do not take account:

> An astronomer cannot produce an eclipse nor can a worm observe one. The existence of phenomena, then, implies a double activity, a certain rapport between giver and receiver. This fact we recognize when we describe experience as the interaction of Ego and non-Ego . . .[15]

What does it mean to speak in this way of subject and object interacting? Essentially, it seems to be a recommendation that while we retain the duality of subject and object as a necessary distinction, we do not construe it as a dualism. Subject and object are not to be considered

[14] Ward, Psychological Principles, p. 13.

[15] Ward, Essays in Philosophy (1927), p. 183.

in isolation from each other, nor even in an abstract relationship. An adequate account of experience requires that it be taken at the level of actual, concrete experience, where the distinction of subject and object must not abstract from, rather it must reflect, the complexities of a live, (and therefore fluid and active) situation. Hence subject and object are said to interact. There is always question of an organic whole in which what for convenience we call the subject is already actively engaged; the subject is indeed, in another way of putting it, a psychic organism interacting with its environment:

> Looking at this relation (viz. the duality of subject and object) as the comparative psychologist has to do, we find that it tallies in the main with the biological relation of organism and environment. The individual of the organism corresponds to, though it is not identical with, that of the psychological subject; while to the environment and its changes corresponds the continuously changing objective continuum or totum objectivum, as we shall call it, though again the two are not identical.[16]

Although this is only a crude approximation it does have the advantage of alerting us to a dimension of the subject which has too often been neglected in more sophisticated treatments. It is to this neglected dimension that Ward calls attention. Experience is not only, nor even primarily, cognitive; prior to this both in time and importance is its active, dynamic character which he calls "conative striving". This priority of conation over cognition has the important consequence that the distinction of subject and object will be modelled in the language of conation rather than cognition, and the analysis of the cognitive content of experience, taken by itself, will be considered inadequate and misleading. The latter is the more important point, and we will take it up as it is argued by Ramsey.

---

[16] Ward, Psychological Principles, pp. 29-30.

1.21 Primacy of Conation

It is a familiar theme throughout Ramsey's writing that there is more to experience than classical empiricist analysis will allow. What he means by this begins to become clear when we realize that he is recommending the acceptance of Ward's critique and of his subordination of cognition to conation.

> I would suggest that cognitive experience (roughly, sense and memory experience) whose 'data' are spatiotemporal particulars, while an integral part of our total experience can never claim to be an account of the whole. Its 'data' do not, when set together, constitute the whole of our experience. Personal experience is more concrete than cognition, and so we would deplore not only the Cartesian separation between subject and object, but also the Cartesian emphasis on man as thinker.[17]

Here is the crucial claim, already made by Ward, that experience is nothing if it is not both personal and concrete. These are the dimensions most often discriminated against in the interests of an analysis whose one concern is to filter out objective content and to be clear where precisely the line is to be drawn between cognitive data and subjective (usually to be interpreted as emotional) modifications of this. It will be easily recognized that this is the concern, in their respective ways, both of rationalists and empiricists, who agree at least to the extent of sharing what Ramsey speaks of as "the Cartesian emphasis on man as thinker", and who think of experience simply as a source or medium of cognition. The needed corrective to this is to think of experience, not in such an abstract way, but at the actual level of personal engagement. At this more basic level, which Ramsey characterizes as "active encounter", the problem is to situate cognitive experience, taken in the more full-bodied sense suggested.

---

[17] 1949:1, "Some Reflections . . .", p. 297.

How does he do this? By striking a balance between analyzing experience as a way of knowing and understanding experience as an activity or, to borrow a phrase, as a 'form of life'. In any attempt to give an account of experience, the lion's share will always fall to the first and more prominent of these two aspects, but it must be not only complemented but qualified by the second of them.

> If we are to understand how experience is both a unity and a duality . . . let us think of it as an active encounter at a more concrete level than cognition, but an encounter which has to be represented in the plurality of spatio-temporal particulars associated with cognitive experience. The empiricist is thus correct when he asserts that it is in terms of the data of cognition—that it is in terms of the spatio-temporal

> particulars—that the total experience has to be described. But that is no more than to say that we take a more modest view of the function and possibilities of metaphysics than did the older rationalists; and as against the empiricists we assert that the possibility and actuality of metaphysics lies in experience being more than the particulars of cognition aggregated together. If we are asked to specify further that experience which is more concrete than cognition, a beginning could be made by specifying it as active and so as having some kinship with conation and will . . .[18]

The drift of his thought is perhaps evident, even if its meaning, or the reasoning behind it, is not as clear as we would wish it to be. He is recommending an approach to experience which recognizes that it is "more than the (spatio-temporal) particulars of cognition aggregated together", by asserting

> at one and the same time both the observer's integral connection with what he observes and his activity in observing it.[19]

In another way of expressing it, he is distinguishing two meanings of 'fact'. The spatio-temporal particulars of cognition are facts in the accepted sense, but he is proposing that the fact of experience as the engagement of the observer in the activity of observation be taken as the more basic 'fact'. In pursuit of this theme he draws heavily on Berkeley, developing in particular the latter's suggestions for an account of experience which underlines the primacy of activity and introduces a distinction

[18] 1949:1, "Some Reflections . . .", p. 297.

[19] Ibid., p. 298.

between 'notions' and 'ideas' which makes it possible to give an account of experience more in accord with this.

1.3 Berkeley: Notions and Ideas

Although it is not until the second edition of the Principles that Berkeley explicitly draws the distinction between 'notions' and 'ideas', he had from the beginning insisted that the term 'idea' should be carefully confined "to things sensible". Thus in his Notebook, the Philosophical Commentaries, we have the following:

> #684 An Idea being of itself unactive cannot be the resemblance or image of an Active thing.
>
> #490 Qu: whether it were not better not to call the operations of the mind ideas, confining this term to things sensible?

What he has in mind is Locke's use of the term 'idea'—meaning passive perception (#706)—and he resists the suggestion that this is adequate to all that comprises knowledge, or the activity of knowing. The emphasis he places on the latter—the active as opposed to the passive aspect of knowledge—becomes more pronounced in his published writings. In the Principles, he writes:

> A Spirit is one simple, undivided, active being—as it perceives ideas it is called the Understanding, and as it produces or otherwise operates about them it is called the Will . . . So far as I can see, the words will, soul, spirit, do not stand for different ideas, or in truth, for any idea at all,but for something which is very different from ideas, and which, being an Agent, cannot be like unto, or represented by, any idea whatsoever. Though it must be owned at the same time that we have some notion of soul, spirit, and the operations of the mind; such as willing, loving,

> hating—inasmuch as we know or understand the meaning of these words. (#27; cf. #142)

Here we have an insistence that the mind's activity is not incidental to an adequate theory of knowledge, that the knower as agent must not be lost sight of in the analysis of his apparatus. In Ramsey's terms, 'I' is not an empty sound; first-person (or agent) language bespeaks an active dimension which can be neither ignored nor dissolved: it must be accomodated. As Berkeley puts it in the Principles:

> What I am myself—that which I denote by the term I—is the same with what is meant by soul or spiritual substance. But if I should say that I was nothing, or that I was an idea, nothing could be more evidently absurd than either of these propositions. (#139)

He returns to the same point in Alciphron:

> An agent, therefore, an active mind or spirit, cannot be an idea, or like an idea. Whence it should seem to follow that those words which denote an active principle, soul, or spirit do not, in a strict and proper sense, stand for ideas. And yet they are not insignificant neither; since I understand what is signified by the terms I, or myself, or know what it means, although it be no idea, nor like an idea, but that which thinks, and wills, and apprehends ideas, and operates about them. Certainly it must be allowed that we have some notion that we understand, or know what is meant by, the terms myself, will, memory, love, hate, and so forth; although, to speak exactly, these words do not suggest so many distinct ideas.[20]

On Ramsey's reading of him, Berkeley holds out the promise of a more adequate empiricism, one which recognizes the fact, and the important implications, of the often neglected dimension of the self's activity in experience.[21]

---

[20] Berkeley, Alciphron, VII, 5, p. 292.

> Berkeley's importance as an empirical philosopher lies in his noticing that an adequate empiricism not only has to have its 'particular objects' or (in his sense) 'ideas' with their appropriate language, which is typically descriptive, but must also characterize each of us with an awareness of our own activity, which by descriptive standards is an epistemological and logical curiosity.[22]

This insistence on the importance and irreducibility of the person as agent serves to place the emphasis squarely on what he considers most problematical, and least satisfactorily dealt with, in the classical empiricist analysis of experience, viz. the problem of self, of self-awareness.

> Here is the positive and permanent claim of the doctrine of notions: first, that the phrase 'personal activity' is logically odd as contrasted with talk about ideas, with discourse which has a typically descriptive logic; and second, that there is metaphysical significance in the fact of 'reflexion' and in the activity this 'reflexion' reveals.[23]

The exploration of each of these claims will lead us directly to the key concepts in Ramsey's analysis, in particular to the one in which we are immediately interested,

[21] Ramsey's treatment of Berkeley can easily seem tendentious, yet he intends it as a development rather than as an interpretation, and it is as such that it must be judged. Cf. 1966:3, "Berkeley and the Possibility . . .", p. 15: "What can we make of his doctrine of notions, even if it is sometimes a matter of piecing suggestions together and going beyond, though never contrary to, what Berkeley explicitly says?".

[22] 1966:3, "Berkeley and the Possibility . . .", p. 17. Cf. 1953:1, "Notions and Ideas . . .", p. 69.

[23] 1966:3, "Berkeley and the Possibility . . .", p. 16. Cf: 1953:1, "Notions and Ideas . . .", p. 68.

viz. 'disclosure situation'.

1.31 First Person Language is 'logically odd'

The phrase 'first person language' is a convenient way of holding together the many questions and problems arising in our use of 'I', e.g. questions about the meaning of 'personal identity', the nature of self (as subject and as agent), the analysis to be given to 'activity words', etc. When Ramsey speaks of logical oddness in this regard he means simply that first person language does not fit, and is not to be forced, into the mould of what he calls third person, or object language. Classical empiricism has always stumbled at this point. A brief reminder of Hume's discomfort with this question will serve as an introductory statement of the problem, after which we will consider two contemporaries, Ryle and Ayer, whose treatment of the same question suffers, according to Ramsey, because of their failure to take first person language seriously, to recognize that it is logically quite different from third person language.

1.311 Hume's Statement of the Problem

When Hume, in the Appendix to his Treatise, has second thoughts on the subject of personal identity and admits to being baffled by it, he is recognizing that it is not as straightforward as he had taken it to be. In the Treatise he had argued quite simply:

> It must be some one impression that gives rise to every real idea. But self or person is not any one impression, but that to which our several impressions and ideas are supposed to have a reference. If any impression gives rise to the idea of self, that impression must continue invariably the same, through the whole course of our lives; since self is supposed to exist after that manner. But there is no impression constant and invariable. Pain and pleasure, grief and joy, passions and sensations succeed each other, and never all exist at the same time. It cannot therefore be from any of these impressions, or from any other, that the idea of self is derived; and consequently there is no such idea.[24]

In short, the self is

> nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement.[25]

This matter of fact treatment of the self begins to falter when further questions are asked about the relation of identity which is said to bind the discrete perceptions:

> whether it be something that really binds our several perceptions together, or only associates their ideas in the imagination; that is, in other words, whether, in pronouncing concerning the identity of a person, we observe some real bond among his perceptions, or only feel one among the ideas we form of them.[26]

True, when first posed in the Treatise, this question is "easily decided", simply by recollecting

> what has already been proved at large, that the understanding never observes any real connection among objects, and that even the union of cause and effect, when strictly examined, resolves itself into a cus-

---

[24] Treatise, ed. Selby-Bigge, I, iv, 6, pp. 251-252.

[25] Ibid., p. 252.

[26] Ibid., p. 259.

> tomary association of ideas.[27]

Our perceptions are held together because memory enables us to relate them to one another on the basis of similarities and of causal connections. In the Appendix, however, the reply is not deemed so simple. On the contrary,

> all my hopes vanish when I come to explain the principles that unite our successive perceptions in our thought or consciousness. I cannot discover any theory which gives me satisfaction on this head.[28]

Hume's way out of the difficulty is to "plead the privilege of the sceptic" and to hope that in time

> others, perhaps, or myself, upon more mature reflections, may discover some hypothesis that will reconcile those contradictions.[29]

The impasse in which Hume finds himself is, in Ramsey's view, one of his own making, and the hypothesis for which he hopes lies at hand, in the recognition that

> something else besides 'distinct perceptions' will be wanted, something else besides the topics of scientific discourse, if we are to do justice to the 'feeling' we have of being ourselves, and of being the same person.[30]

To accept this as a possible implication of the impasse is to find the way out of it; it is to recognize that talk about self does not admit of reduction to talk about objects, precisely because it is different, and calls for a different kind of account and analysis. It is logically odd.

---

[27] _Ibid_., pp. 259-260.

[28] _Ibid_., Appendix, pp. 635-636.

[29] _Ibid_., Appendix, p. 636.

[30] 1963:2, "Biology and Personality . . .", p. 37.

> Hume confesses that experience, as and when it involves what he would call a 'feeling' of 'personal identity', cannot be treated in terms of his theory of distinct ideas and impressions. In more contemporary language, 'self-awareness' is, for Hume, logically problematical. Its logical mapping has yet to be done. What sort of fact is it? How oddly is it to be described?[31]

Of the many attempts to answer these questions, to take up the problem where Hume dropped it, we will now consider two which Ramsey thinks inadequate because each fails to accomodate its analysis of first person language to the importance, and primitiveness, enjoyed by such language in lived experience.

1.312 Critique of Ryle

As is well known, Ryle is the avowed opponent to any attempt to accord privileged status to the self:

> on the account of self-knowledge that I shall give, knowledge of what there is to be known about other people is restored to approximate parity with self-knowledge. The sorts of things that I can find out about myself are the same as the sorts of things that I can find out about other people, and the methods of finding them out are much the same.[32]

What Ryle is opposing is the idea of the self as an inner (and invisible) object which we cannot observe but must try to 'introspect'. In the effort to isolate it in this way it has come to be considered an elusive, indeed a mysterious kind of entity which has enticed philosophers away from the plain world of the senses into a realm of metaphysical fantasy. Ryle's remedy for this is simple and drastic: belief in such a self is a philosophical superstition from which we can be freed simply by taking the trouble to inspect the language which seems to harbour, or encourage belief in, this ghost called 'self'. It is true that we cannot, as it were, catch ourselves in the net of our language, but Ryle thinks this no more strange than that we cannot catch our own shadow which always—and, as he would say, 'systematically'—remains a jump ahead of us. The act of reflection on oneself—self-commentary, self-criticism and the like—is characterized by him as a "higher-order action", one whose point of reference is a previous or complementary action. In this way he is satisfied that the elusiveness of the self is no more mysterious than the elusiveness of the next possible step in an infinite temporal series:

---

[31] 1955:1, "The Systematic Elusiveness . . .", p. 194.

[32] Ryle, The Concept of Mind (1949), p. 155.

> . . . nor can every act of the diarist be the topic of a record in his diary; for the last entry made in his diary still demands that the making of it should in its turn be chronicled. This, I think, explains the feeling that my last year's self, or my yesterday's self, could in principle be exhaustively described and accounted for by me, but that my to-day's self perpetually slips out of any hold of it that I try to take. It also explains the apparent non-parallelism between the notion of 'I' and that of 'you', without

> construing the elusive residuum as any kind of ultimate mystery.[33]

This hardy piece of demythologizing, so typical of Ryle, is more emphatic than convincing, and Ramsey, of course, is not convinced.

Ryle's assumption, as Ramsey is quick to notice, is that the elusiveness of self is simply a matter of temporal delay:

> On this view of Ryle's the self eludes me for no other reason than that the next moment eludes me, and as it is a necessary feature of time that there should be a temporal flow, so also does this-moment elusiveness become next-moment presence.[34]

The question which Ramsey presses at this point has to do with the meaning to be given to the subject in the subject-object distinction which is required at every step: i.e. the present meaning of the subject, not some future account of it as object of a higher order awareness.

> If we assume that what eludes us now, becomes in the next minute wholly tractable, then, since, at this next minute, an earlier situation has been completely objectified, what account can we then give of the subject/object distinction which is the permanent presupposition of all living and talking alike? What account can we give of our 'subjectivity' 'now'?[35]

In his attempts to meet this question, and to elucidate the sense of 'subject' which he considers is seriously neglected in Ryle's treatment, he effects a crucial shift

[33] Ryle, p. 196.

[34] 1955:1, "The Systematic Elusiveness . . .", p. 195.

[35] Ibid., p. 197.

in emphasis from consideration of 'self' as a problematic object of knowledge to 'self' as agent, i.e. to knowledge of self precisely as agent, as active subject.

The argument here resumes a theme developed earlier, in the discussion on the concept of experience as 'active encounter', the specific interest here being its bearing on the logic of first person language.

> Every scientific context of 'observables', every brand of scientific discourse, presupposes an 'observer' who uses the context, and who, as a user of it, cannot be contained within it. The very concept of an object presupposes a subject, as the very concept of a subject presupposes an object. To use the one concept without the other is to be logically inadequate and incomplete. The very subject/object distinction is a presupposition of all language, as it is a presupposition of all our talking about experience. Here then are logical grounds why the sciences, in terms of 'objects' alone, can never give a complete account of our subjectivity, indeed of any part of our subjectivity that is basically subjective.[36]

To put this in yet another way, reminiscent of yet another theme (developed in the first chapter): scientific language, which is properly restricted to 'objects', is logically incomplete: it is an abstraction from, and requires to be grounded in, the language of actual experience, viz. first person language, which is the logically primitive language.

> To suppose that scientific discourse could in principle be the whole story about ourselves is to suppose that second- or third-person language is logically

---

[36] 1965:2, "Biology and Personality . . .", p. 180. Cf. 1963:2, "Biology and Personality . . .", p. 37.

> primitive and ultimate. But in fact all second- and third-person language requires a first-person setting and context for logical completeness.[37]

To use what is perhaps a crude image, we may say that instead of the self trying to catch its shadow (in objective language)—which is the way Ryle sees it—we now have the recognition that the shadow is derivative and not primary, that the self which casts the shadow is not to be confused with it. In other words, first person language is _sui generis_, and while it is closely associated with third person language it is logically idiosyncratic, logically odd with respect to it.

One of the examples offered by Ramsey may help clarify this claim sufficiently to allow us to pass from a consideration of what it means to the more important question of the form of analysis that will do justice to the logical idiosyncracy. Quite barely stated, the claim is that there would be no language without speakers, and that every statement no matter how 'objective', issues from a subject.

> "The car does 50 miles to the gallon" may seem to be a clearly independent, ultimate assertion, but in fact it carries with it (however much this may be overlooked) a necessary social and verbal context, and more important from our point of view, and as a minimum, it presupposes a speaker who might make his existence known by uttering some sort of first hand introduction such as "I am telling you, the car . . .", or "I can

[37] _Ibid_. This is a theme to which Ramsey constantly returns; cf. 1963:3, "Theological Literacy", p. 4. 1964:1, _Models and Mystery_, pp. 27, 68.

vouch for it, the car . . .", and so on.[38]

A truism, yes; but not a trivial or pointless one. It is particularly pertinent in discussions which purport to be about first person language and yet are cast, without question, in the mould of third person language. The point is to elucidate first person language in a way that will be faithful both to what differentiates and to what integrates it with third person language; to relate it to this without confusing or collapsing the two into one 'object language'.

1.313 Critique of Ayer

In his contribution to the symposium entitled Biology and Personality, Ramsey expresses himself as substantially in agreement with Ayer's treatment of the question of self-knowledge in The Problem of Knowledge:

> In fact it might be said not so much that I disagree with Ayer, as that I would wish to continue the story beyond the point where he leaves off.[39]

The point at which Ayer stops is the admission that 'I' is indeed a referring expression, and that the referent can be indicated with the help of demonstratives but may not be equivalent to any set of descriptions:

> . . . referential expressions . . . do not owe their meaning to their describing anything at all. I call

---

[38] Ibid. His discussion of the metaphysical index to our language, and of 'I' as the paradigm of all 'index words', was simply a more sophisticated way of arguing the same point.

[39] 1965:2, "Biology and Personality . . .", p. 181.

> them referential expressions just because their use is demonstrative and not descriptive. In an actual context one can, as it were, produce what they refer to: but if we have to identify it by description, then we can do no more than instance some of its properties; for there is nothing else to be described.[40]

Ramsey latches on to Ayer's apparently innocent qualification—"one can, as it were, produce what they refer to"—and proceeds to take it in a direction in which Ayer is certainly not prepared to follow.

> Notice that he says that in an actual context one can only 'as it were' produce the reference of 'I'. Now what is 'as it were' production? What is production that is only in a curious sense production? Is Ayer, and I would say rightly, here acknowledging that the way in which we 'produce' I is altogether different from the way in which I produce an object along with a demonstrative expression?[41]

The direction in which Ramsey is moving is, as we might have expected, to take the discussion away from the consideration of self as an object—to be produced or described—and to interpret it in an active sense:

> we do no production at all, but let the subject disclose itself.[42]

At no time is the subject to be reduced to an object, although the grammatical, subject/predicate form may indeed suggest this, since we have to speak of the subject disclosing itself.

---

[40] Ayer, The Problem of Knowledge (1956), pp. 211-212.

[41] 1965:2, "Biology and Personality . . .", pp. 182-183.

[42] Ibid., p. 183.

> But I would say that the assertion can be given a logical form which avoids this blunder. . . . On this view talk about the subject disclosing itself would have to be matched by the way in which we can know and talk of our being active while we are being active. There has to be in both cases a subjective awareness which is not of an 'object'.[43]

The claim that self-knowledge, in this sense of subjective awareness, is truly a matter of knowledge, only not of an object, brings us back to what Ramsey has called the "metaphysical significance in the fact of 'reflexion' and in the activity this 'reflexion' reveals".[44]

1.32 The Metaphysical Significance of Subjective Awareness

The 'self' which the empiricist has found to be so elusive cannot simply be dismissed as a subborn illusion, it is not nothing and yet it is clearly not 'something' in the sense of being an object like other objects.[45] The clue to what we mean by 'self' is provided by the way in which we come to be aware of it, the way in which we come to use emphatically first person language. Ramsey argues that the awareness of self—of myself—breaks in on us in the course of action, at the concrete level of lived experience, so that an empirical account of it must be in terms of such an experience or, as he prefers to call it, of such a disclosure situation.

---

[43] 1965:2, "Biology and Personality . . .", p. 183, footnote.

[44] 1966:3, "Berkeley and Possibility . . .", p. 16. Cf. supra., 1.3, p. 77.

[45] It is well to be aware that Ramsey's language here derives from Bradley rather than from Berkeley, particularly his frequently off-handed use of 'subject' and 'object', and his pet phrase: "more than objects". The following example from Bradley's Essays on Truth and Reality, the only source Ramsey cites in Bradley, may suffice to illustrate this: ". . . what we experience is not merely objects. The experienced will not all fall under the head of an object for a subject. . . . In my general feeling at any moment there is more than the objects before me, and no perception of objects will exhaust the sense of a living emotion." (p. 159)

> My suggestion is that each of us becomes aware of what is distinctively himself when surveying a set of 'distinct perceptions' there breaks in on him a self-awareness, a self-affirmation of such a kind that he recognizes the distinct perception to be 'his', becomes aware at the same time of what it is to be himself, the same self; becomes aware of his personal identity. It is in such a disclosure as and when it occurs around 'objects', that we have the empirical basis for all distinctive first person utterances.[46]

What has to be emphasized here is that "disclosure" is being proposed as the "empirical basis" for first person language, and that we are to think of it as a factor in experience, as in some sense 'given', not initiated by us. The notion of 'self' is prompted in us, reinforced and filled out, in the course of, and in dependence on, experience of 'objects', but is not reducible to these; hence 'self-disclosure' has something important to tell us about 'experience' which empiricists would do well to heed.

> Further, let it be noted, such a disclosure does not occur in spite of, but only because and in so far as there are, objects of which relevant descriptions can be given. The disclosure of ourselves occurs around a

[46] 1965:2, "Biology and Personality . . .", p. 183.

> certain set of circumstances or other, which then constitutes, by way of descriptive terms, a descriptive approximation of what it is that has been disclosed to us. With every disclosure of our subjectivity will be associated these descriptive approximations, what we may take pro tem as reliable descriptions of ourselves, 'models' (if we so wish to call them) of what it is that is being disclosed.[47]

What Ramsey offers in the concept of disclosure situation is the promise of an empirically based analysis of first person language, such that it leaves us open to the full lived dimension of experience—which is, after all, the plane on which first person language operates. To illustrate this Ramsey has used the quite helpful image of a three dimensional figure ('I') which is capable only of two dimensional projection (in 'object' language). He proposes this image as an alternative to the view that man is—that I am—an object which in time will be exhaustively explained by scientific studies.

> Suppose some area is progressively better and better covered by scientific developments. Must not such developments eventually cover the whole area, and then be completely adequate? But this is not the only picture we may have of scientific developments, and my point would be that it is a badly misleading picture. What then do I propose to substitute for it? What we must picture, in some alternative fashion, is rather ourselves as what each of us realizes himself to be in certain cases of decisive activity. . . . My suggestion is that we must picture ourselves as (say) a three-dimensional figure, which has the possibility of an infinite number of two-dimensional projections, representing what any and all scientific accounts talk about. This is only a picture, but it is more adequate, I suggest, than the other, in so far as it pre-

---

[47] 1965:2, "Biology and Personality . . .", p. 183.

> preserves an irreducible measure of self-transcendence with the possibility of unending scientific elucidation.[48]

The importance of the image, for Ramsey's purpose, is its suggestion that first person language, as the implicit setting for all language, is what alerts us to the fact that scientific language, however rich and promising, is in the end a flat projection which needs correction. The analysis of first person language provides that correction, opens us to the missing or distorted dimension, but in so doing it is necessarily rooted in, and not at all opposed to, third person or scientific language. The question once again, however, is how is this to be done?

The answer comes with the realization that a break must be made with the descriptive empiricism governing the analysis of scientific language:

> How can we display a fact which in part is observationally elusive? . . . In the first place we plainly cannot give a straightforward account of what is observationally elusive, in observation language. All we can do is to evoke or induce by some tale or other, the sort of situation for which part-elusiveness is claimed. All we can do is to tell a story and hope that it works, viz. to evoke a situation which, as it occurs, displays the inadequacy of observational description.[49]

As stated here his case must seem both weak and uninteresting, being dependent on psychological rather than on logical factors, on the "hope" that a story will do the trick.

[48] 1964:2, Religion and Science . . ., pp. 60-61.

[49] 1955:1, "The Systematic Elusiveness . . .", p. 198.

Yet his suggestion is not as barren as this, and he does argue that the kind of situation to which scientific language cannot do justice introduces the need for logical, and not merely psychological, adjustments:

> I am claiming that there are certain characteristically personal situations to be evoked in certain ways which are not wholly tractable in terms of (public) behaviour stories, even if these are complex enough to cover part, i.e. the public part, of what is meant by attitudes, emotions and the like. . . . I am claiming that there are certain stories which, when told, might evoke the kind of situation I have in mind. Now this may seem a very odd way in which to conduct an argument, but we have to realise that, if I am right, it is logically impossible to describe in straightforward perceptual language the kind of situation to which I wish to call attention;—it is logically impossible to play a straightforward kind of explanation game and to have the result we need. For the kind of situation which I am claiming occurs, if it does occur, is more than perceptual language will straightforwardly deal with.[50]

We may still be nervous of the psychological overtones in this (e.g. ". . . the result we need . . ."), but the logical claim is clearly more important, viz. that descriptions, no matter how detailed, are not enough to cover 'the facts' of the kind of situation he has in mind. If it can be upheld, that is to say if it can be shown that there are situations which can only be misrepresented by even the most sensitive descriptive account of them, then we have empirical grounds for being dissatisfied with the language of description, hitherto thought to be the paradigm of empirical analysis. It is for this reason that Ramsey so often has recourse to 'stories', dramatizing or evoking a situation in which something more is involved than can be directly talked about or described. The missing dimension is discerned, we may say, in the distorted flatness of the two-dimensional projection, or—and this is a more accurate way of expressing it—the missing dimension is disclosed to us when the dramatized situation 'comes alive' for us, or stands out from its flat projection in language.

---

[50] 1956:3, "Persons and Funerals . . .", p. 336.

This is what Ramsey had in mind when he spoke of the metaphysical significance of reflexion or, as he prefers to say, 'self-disclosure'. It is a fact of the greatest consequence that the active dimension of experience is integral to an adequate concept of experience, and that we are made aware of this dimension in a way that offers the possibility of an empirically based metaphysics. The experience each of us can have of 'I', of self precisely as an active agent, becomes the paradigm of transcendence, since it is accepted as a fact which cannot however be treated as an object. In Berkeley's terms, besides 'ideas' empiricism need 'notions':

> So Berkeley's appeal to notions was an appeal to a self-disclosure that discloses what I am beyond the 'ideas'—ideas of sensation, which are given by descriptive discourse, more precisely by scientific discourse—when I am distinctively active. Here in the notion I have of my activity is the paradigm of transcendence, and the word 'I' or 'self'—insofar as it explicates this—has no descriptive logic and describes no object; rather, it occurs in assertions that, if I may use J. L. Austin's phrase, have the logic of

> performative or illocutionary utterances. These are assertions that talk of what is happening when it is happening. The word 'I' hints at, points to, what is distinctive about what is happening to whoever is using a sentence containing the word 'I' to talk of his activity.[51]

In Ramsey's way of expressing it, straightforward description and the type of explanation that comes with it require to be complemented by his notion of disclosure and by an analysis of disclosure situations.

1.4 Summary and Conclusions

We now have in its essentials the concept of experience favoured by Ramsey, and we know what he has in mind when he speaks of empiricism and the range he hopes to win for it. It only remains to draw this together in a summary fashion that will help clarify the connection between 'experience', as used by Ramsey, and 'disclosure situation'.

Both his concept of experience (hence also his empiricism) and his concept of language (hence also his analysis) find their focus in the life and action of actual persons. It is for this reason that he insists upon taking experience as a complex whole, as a situation in which subject and object are in active interchange.[52] Then it will no longer be empirically justifiable to distinguish subject from object as cleanly as does classical empiricism, which extols what is 'objective' (i.e. in principle observable) and distrusts what is 'subjective' (taken to mean 'private'). His preference for 'situation', as perhaps a more adequate category for what he intends by 'experience', prompts him to promote an alliance between Berkeley and Bradley insofar as each saw the need to preserve and take seriously the unity of experience, while allowing due play to the analysis of certain aspects of it.

---

[51] 1966:3, "Berkeley and the Possibility . . .", p. 18.

[52] See 1953:2, "Homage to G. Berkeley . . .", p. 117: "To make Berkeley satisfactory . . . we must suppose that this self-awareness is rather self-other awareness, so the reference of 'notions' is to what is more straightforwardly called a 'self-other active interchange'. And if this savours of a view of 'experiential unities' closer to the

> Berkeley might have said that his ideas were abstract parts of an active whole, a situation which might for the moment be described as 'my activity'. It would then be something not altogether unlike Bradley's "positive . . . whole of feeling", about which Bradley indeed might have said that we had no 'idea' but only a 'notion'. For he saw that it could not be an externalized particular . . . Further, if we look at Bradley's argument we shall see similarities between his "immediate experience", "immediate feeling" and what I have called a disclosure situation.[53]

It cannot be said as yet that we have been shown in any convincing way that these alleged similarities between Berkeley and Bradley converge, as Ramsey suggests they do, in his concept of a disclosure situation. On the basis, however, of our examination so far, we may concede their possibility, and allow further that he has said enough to make the concept of a disclosure situation worthy of inves-

---

19th century than to the 18th, I will only say that I think Berkeley has suggestions in that direction." Cf. 1953:1, "Notions and Ideas . . .", p. 71.

[53] 1966:3, "Berkeley and the Possibility . . .", p. 18. Cf. 1953:1, "Notions and Ideas . . .", p. 69.

tigation, whatever may be thought of its supposed connections with Bradley and Berkeley.

2. *Disclosure Situation*

Briefly, we may say that a disclosure situation is a situation which is 'evoked' and not simply described. Description is an essential part, but only a part, of the technique required to encompass the whole situation; from the fact that it must in the end by 'brought to life', and from the way in which it is thus invoked, the situation is said to "exceed the spatio-temporal objects it contains".[54] It is no secret, of course, that Ramsey is here making a crucial move on the strength of which his proposed analysis of religious or theological language must be judged:

> . . . here for the religious philosopher is the crucial question. Here is the one ontological claim on which he cannot yield. *To have distinctive religious language at all, there must be situations not restricted to the spatio-temporal elements they contain*.[55]

Perhaps the most important point to note, however, is that he is not arguing for another kind of reality—religious, spiritual, supernatural—but for "situations which are not *restricted* to . . ."; in other words, it is one and the same situation to which strictly empirical, or let us say scientific, language and religious or theological language are appropriately applied.

---

[54] 1960:2, *Freedom and Immortality*, pp. 79-80.

[55] 1956:1, "Empiricism and Religion . . .", p. 162.

> The problem which faces the philosophical theologian is indeed twofold. Sense-experience must somehow or other be relevant to religious language; yet the assertions of religious language can never be exhausted by any reference to what is seen, heard, touched, tasted or smelt. How can religious language reconcile these two positions on what must seem to be a precarious knife-edge balance? How can sense-experience be relevant for religious assertions, without these religious assertions being given a 'naturalistic' interpretation and so ceasing to be religious? How can religious assertions go beyond sense-experience (as they need to do to become religious) and still be intelligible? . . . What the religious man claims is one situation which is both what is seen and more than what is seen.[56]

As might be expected, in the further elucidation of this claim for "more than what is seen", he has recourse to situations with a prominently ethical or religious dimension. It would seem, however, that these are selected for ease of illustration, and that the claim is made of any situation whatever.

> Does not every situation have both its 'facts' and its 'values', so that no matter how differently these can be talked of or treated, there must, since they belong to the one situation, be some connection between them? . . . Within one situation, values and facts are inextricably linked. Whether we 'ought' or 'ought not' depends very much on what a thing 'is' or 'is not'. Is and ought, Science and Ethics, while being distinguishable, are also connected.[57]

This larger claim need not, however, be pursued here. It will suffice to remember that experience is basically personal and concrete, so that what is true of characteristically personal situations will be true to a degree of all situations. A disclosure situation, indeed, can be any situation in which we come to a realization of ourselves as transcending (as "more than") the spatio-temporal particulars which constitute its description.

---

[56] 1961:5, "The Challenge . . .", p. 245.

[57] 1957:2, "Ethics and Reason", p. 155.

> No matter how much of our behaviour is impersonal, there are nevertheless decision-situations, such as when we respond to obligations, when we display a moral response which is not a causal reaction, where our behaviour is not restricted to the spatio-temporal patterns which characterize it.[58]

Such decision-situations will serve as a paradigm for disclosure situations, providing clear illustration of what is distinctive about them, both as to their 'content' and the manner of their analysis. It is the latter question that is our primary concern here: how are we to understand and give an account of disclosure situations? Specific questions about content, being incidental to a methodological inquiry such as this, need do no more than serve as reminders of what essentially the whole discussion is about and where the emphasis is meant to fall.

> The case of those who claim freedom and responsibility for some actions, is that in these cases a man's activity is not something of which an exhaustive treatment can be given by the biological sciences but is characterized by a subjectivity which can never—and it is a logical 'never'—be translated without remainder into a causal nexus of objects.[59]

[58] 1960:2, Freedom and Immortality, p. 66.

[59] 1965:2, "Biology and Personality . . .", p. 201.

2.1 Disclosure: Discernment and Commitment

It is "situations which are characteristically personal, situations where we are decisively active, to which we shall best turn", if we are to find the empirical ground for theological language.[60] In such situations there is question of an understanding which proceeds towards a decision, and consists of a discernment to which a certain commitment or response is seen to be appropriate, if not actually required.

> Prescriptivity alone arises when there is a situation which can be characterised as a discernment as well as a commitment, which exhibits a claim as well as a response, and such a claim has to be 'seen' and acknowledged before it is action-compelling. In brief, such 'seeing' is the correlate of a disclosure.[61]

Discernment and disclosure then are correlatives, underlining in different ways the objective element in the situation while at the same time providing for and requiring personal involvement, in the form of response to what is discerned, or disclosed. With this combination, which is not easy to maintain, we are at the heart of Ramsey's method, and at the source too of some of the major objections brought against it. What we must try to do is show how, in his view, objectivity and subjectivity are preserved while being fused in the 'unity-in-duality' of a disclosure situation, where something is discerned which calls for a personal

[60] 1965:3, "Contemporary Philosophy . . .", p. 53.

[61] 1966:2(b), "Moral Judgments . . .", pp. 162-163.

response, and not simply a passive acknowledgement of its truth.

> The kind of situation from which religious discourse takes it rise is one where the verifiable criteria on which the empiricists lay so much stress fall into such a pattern that they evoke insight, give rise to a disclosure, with which is matched an appropriate response, a personal commitment in which we affirm ourselves as persons. The language of religion will thus be primarily evocative of a situation which in this way becomes subjectively and objectively alive, which is objectively and subjectively transcendent—and we have an emphasis on disclosure, intuition, personal involvement.[62]

Our main concern now is with the objectivity claimed for a disclosure, and particularly with the claims made at one and the same time for its empirical and transcendent character. We will approach this by considering first the general question of the kind of evidence considered relevant in a disclosure situation.

2.2 Disclosure and Evidence

We may begin by noticing that, a disclosure situation being what it is, "evidence"

> has a strange empirical relevance . . . . No amount of 'evidence' alone can guarantee what exceeds all the evidence taken together: something which is spatio-temporal and more. 'Resurrection', like 'duty' and 'love', all specify occasions . . . for which a whole host of empirical criteria are relevant, but these criteria are organized by, and are never exhaustive evidence for, the loyalties they name. None of the criteria in itself guarantees that situation—discernment-response—which exceeds them all.[63]

[62] 1965:3, "Contemporary Philosophy . . .", p. 54.

[63] 1957:1, Religious Language, p. 149.

Taking up the suggestion of the Resurrection as a case in point, we can agree that certain matters of fact, certain historical findings, are relevant to belief in the Resurrection without making the mistake of deriving such belief solely from this 'evidence', as if no more were involved than an historical conclusion that such and such happened.

> The Resurrection is a situation which is a matter of fact and more, an 'object of sense' and more, precisely as the most intimate personal interchange is all that, too . . . Resurrection-belief (is) a total response to something which touches us personally.[64]

Resurrection-belief is thus a clear instance of

> a commitment which is based upon but goes beyond rational considerations which are matters of speculation;[65]

it is

> a fuller discernment which embraces 'objects of sense' and more, evokes and is fulfilled in a response, a commitment, in virtue of which we become, by our response, Christian 'witnesses of the Resurrection'.[66]

Clearly, what requires to be examined here is the move from 'discernment' to 'fuller discernment', or the move by which, beginning with certain matters of fact (empirical evidence) we go beyond it in virtue of a personal response, elicited from us by what is discerned or disclosed. It is not a matter of discerning new facts, or more facts of the same kind, but of discerning a claim or challenge "arising round and out of the facts" and eliciting a certain response.[67]

---

[64] 1957:3, "The Logical Character . . .", p. 190. Cf. 1961:3, "History and the Gospels", pp. 212 ff. and 1965:1, Christian Discourse, p. 22.

[65] 1957:1, Religious Language, p. 19.

[66] 1957:3, "The Logical Character . . .", p. 191.

The questions to be asked then are broadly these: 1) what are we to say is discerned or disclosed, to what are we responding? and 2) what criteria can be given to differentiate appropriate and inappropriate responses?

2.3 Recognition of the Transcendent

We will do well to note, in the first place, that Ramsey objects strongly to an interpretation of 'disclosure' which takes it to be a private experience:

> when we appeal to 'cosmic disclosures' we are not just talking about ourselves, nor merely of our own 'experience', we are not just appealing to our own private way of looking at the world.[68]

Far from being subjective in this 'private' sense, a disclosure is a 'presentation of the given'—in that sense 'objective'—which is such as to win from the subject the recognition of transcendence, his own and (in a sense to be explained) that of some objective counterpart to himself.

> In any case we must not suppose that a 'disclosure', a penny dropping, is something utterly and wholly subjective. I become aware of myself as I become aware of an environment transcending observables.[69]

It is indeed the objective character of the disclosure which

[67] 1966:2(b), "Moral Judgments . . .", p. 163.

[68] 1966:1, "Talking about God . . .", p. 87.

[69] 1961:2, "On the Possibility . . .", p. 168.

is so important in the analysis of religious language:

> For a distinctively religious assertion, the further claim must now be made that alongside and interlocking with such an awareness of ourselves as transcendent, is an awareness of objective transcendence as well.[70]

Every disclosure, then, is a disclosure of transcendence, both subjective and objective; the one is necessarily implied by the other, and they stand or fall together.

> Not only may descriptive events be so ordered as to disclose a subject which while it includes them also transcends them, but the descriptive events may also be ordered so as to disclose an object which in a similar sort of way transcends them objectively. In this way, a transcendent object is associated with a transcendent subject in the same situation. We become aware of it as we become aware of ourselves.[71]

When all this has been said, however, we may still be puzzled: what is meant by subjective and objective transcendence here, what is it, in other words, that a disclosure discloses? He speaks of a disclosure as a 'confrontation', or as a situation in which everything, as it were, falls into place, presents itself to us and claims our attention in a particular way; the Universe, he likes to say, "comes alive" and elicits a certain response from us. Here we have at least a first approximation of what it is that is disclosed:

> A cosmic disclosure reveals something of whose existence we are aware precisely because we are aware of being confronted. Indeed we speak of a disclosure

[70] 1961:5, "The Challenge . . .", p. 246.

[71] 1965:2, "Biology and Personality . . .", p. 185.

> precisely when we acknowledge such a confrontation, something declaring itself to us, something relatively active when we are relatively passive. In a cosmic disclosure, the whole Universe is individuated and particularized in this way.[72]

"The whole Universe" is a vague enough phrase and initially may not seem to be very helpful, but it has a quite definite and important meaning for Ramsey. It may best be taken as shorthand for what is meant by saying that we are brought to discern, or recognize, a pattern or unity which in a given situation "declares itself to us", strikes us in a way which invests such phrases as "the whole Universe" with a distinctive importance. No matter what its starting point, a genuine disclosure will always display the same characteristics, being at one and the same time both personal in character and cosmic in scope. The combination is important. A disclosure situation is one in which a man 'comes to himself' and does so in virtue of being 'arrested' by something which he recognizes as clearly distinct from himself, yet which cannot be identified with any particular feature or features of the situation. He is brought to recognize himself and 'the world' in a way that accentuates a certain kinship between them, his own keen sense of individuality and transcendence being awakened in him by circumstances which insinuate an individuality and transcendence about 'the world'.

[72] 1966:1, "Talking about God . . .", pp. 87-88.

> Now because of the cosmic character of such a disclosure, because of its all-embracing range, because in it the whole Universe confronts us (cf. Luther: "Here I stand, I can no other"), I think we are entitled to speak of there being a single individuation expressing itself in each and all of these disclosures. In other words, from any and every cosmic disclosure we can claim to believe in one x (where x for the moment remains to be elucidated) precisely because we talk of there being 'one world'.[73]

The foregoing provides only an initial approximation of what it is that is disclosed; we may now ask what more there is to be said about it, how this 'one x' of which he speaks is to be elucidated. To attempt an answer to this question here would be to anticipate the theme of the following chapter, since it is Ramsey's view that we can say what is disclosed only by using 'models' which the disclosure itself suggests.

> A cosmic disclosure will in the one way or in the other supply a model as that which alone enables us to be articulate about what has disclosed itself to us.[74]

We may, however, remind ourselves briefly of how he proposes to identify the 'one x', postponing its further elucidation.

He is fond of citing 'Duty' as an instance of an overall objective moral demand that brings a man to himself by confronting him with a transcendence which is distinct from him, yet has kinship with him and makes claims on him.

---

[73] 1966:1, "Talking about God . . .", p. 87. Schedler's criticism of Ramsey's movement "from the revelation of connexion to something that is revealed through the connexion, a cosmic 'I'", may be turned by giving due emphasis to this claim of "individuation". See N. O. Schedler, "Methodology in the metaphysics of theism . . .", Unpublished dissertation (1967), p. 219.

[74] 1966:1, "Talking about God . . .", p. 88.

> We become aware of ourselves and indeed of our responsibility and freedom as and when we respond transcendently to the claim of what is a transcendent, moral challenge. . . . It is in becoming aware of such an overall objective moral demand that in such circumstances I become aware of myself, my freedom, my responsibility.[75]

But 'Duty' is not the only path down which we must look for the transcendent which is disclosed to us; there are others —indeed any situation can be the occasion of a disclosure —and it is Ramsey's contention that they all converge in a common disclosure of 'God'.

> Disclosures can occur which do not arise around personal nor moral behaviour but around cosmic events or microscopic phenomena. These can occur when we reflect on causal sequences, when we look at daffodils in a particular way, or penetrate into the secrets of the ocean-bed. In all such disclosures we are aware of some 'other', which cannot be thought to be another 'I'. Such situations as these are pre-eminently those which afford the empirical basis for theism. For they connect 'God' with all those features of the world that a metaphysics confined to persons or values would have to ignore. 'God' can now integrate not only talk about persons and values but talk about science and perception.[76]

The move from talk of some 'other' to talk of 'God' seems suspiciously swift, but it has to be remembered that 'God', as used here, is to be understood with reference to all that has been said about the way in which transcendence is dis-

[75] 1965:2, "Biology and Personality . . .", pp. 185-186.

[76] 1961:2, "On the Possibility . . .", p. 173. Note the connection with his discussion of 'God' as Apex Word.

closed to us, subjectively and objectively.

> If 'I' is an appropriate label for all the disclosure situations on the subjective side, why should we not introduce the word 'God' as a sort of objective counterpart to 'I'? The basic justification for the word 'God', then, is that in talking about the universe, in reckoning with distinctive situations, we find we need to talk of more than Duty and Absolute Value. 'God' thus takes its place with the various words and phrases which one by one specify what is distinctively objective about this or that disclosure situation: 'Duty', 'Absolute Value', 'First Cause', 'Necessary Being', and so on.[77]

The point of the foregoing has not been to recommend nor even to evaluate, his technique for justifying theism, but to elucidate in a general way what he intends by 'disclosure', and in particular how he goes about articulating what it is that is disclosed. All of which leads us naturally into a discussion of his theory of models as a necessary outgrowth of disclosure and indispensable medium for articulating the transcendence which is disclosed. Before passing to this, however, we must pause briefly over one further thorny question about the objective factor in a disclosure: are there any criteria that will help draw the line between an objective 'disclosure' and a subjective (and possibly mistaken) 'impression'?

2.4 Criteria of Objectivity

Ninian Smart has been one of Ramsey's most persistent critics on this question. Given the diversity of Religions, each of which, according to Ramsey's method of analysis, can and must be grounded in a disclosure, how, he asks, are we to adjudicate the 'truth-claims' of each religion? How do we decide the objectivity, or validity, of one disclosure as opposed to another?

---

[77] 1960:2, Freedom and Immortality, p. 48. Note the connection here with what from a slightly different point of view he calls 'qualified models'.

> An account of religious discourse which appeals to disclosure (or revelation or religious experience, etc.) must indicate why there are (rather radically) different ways of expressing what it is that disclosures disclose. It must also give guidance as to what considerations would be relevant to choosing one set of doctrines rather than another.[78]

According to Smart, again, Ramsey offers

> no criteria of objectivity, i.e. of truth . . . beyond the fact that if the religious man goes on talking long enough a penny will drop. Such 'verification' cannot be enough, for, as we have seen, there are alternative ways of talking.[79]

As we would expect, in replying to this Ramsey denies the charge though he does admit a degree of negligence in his earlier formulations of the disclosure theory. Smart, however, misrepresents the theory to the extent that he appears to conceive of a disclosure somewhat apart from the complex setting or situation out of which it arises, and from which it cannot be separated. In one way of putting this, Ramsey's whole point about disclosures is that questions about objectivity (or truth) are not as matter of fact as they seem; objectivity is not to be construed in terms of independent access to objects, but on the model rather of 'reliability': it is a measure of the fidelity of our discourse to the complexity of the situation which is its subject.

---

[78] N. Smart, "Paradox in Religions", Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, sv 33 (1959), pp. 225-226.

[79] N. Smart, "The Intellectual Crisis of British Christianity", Theology 68 (1965), p. 34.

> Any claim for objectivity stands or falls with the reliability of the conceptual scheme in terms of which the 'object' is talked about; and the claim for objectivity in relation to cosmic disclosures stands or falls on the reliability of what those disclosures enable us to say about God.[80]

Smart's rejoinder to this is to ask for criteria of reliability:

> If the reliability of what we say about God is not guaranteed by the disclosures themselves, what role do the latter play? If it is so guaranteed, then disclosures are self-authenticating, including non-theistic ones, whose occurrence Prof. Ramsey allows.[81]

Ramsey is happier with this way of putting the question, since it requires that we take into consideration all the factors in a disclosure situation; in particular it shifts the emphasis from a curiosity about the 'object' disclosed to a keener appreciation of the close ties between the contextual setting of a disclosure, on the one hand, and, on the other, the discourse judged appropriate to it.

> Talk about the object of a disclosure always comes within a contextual setting, from which it will also

---

[80] 1965:4, "The Intellectual Crisis . . .", p. 110.

[81] N. Smart, "The Intellectual Crisis of British Christianity", Theology 68 (1965), p. 352 (Letter).

derive what justification can be given to it.[82] In this way, it is not a matter of disclosures somehow being self-authenticating, but of the discourse to which they give rise reflecting ever more reliably the characteristics of the disclosure situation.

In the end, these questions require that we shift our attention to his discussion of the kind of language required by, and considered adequate to, experience as he has characterized it in his concept of disclosure situation. A disclosure situation is such precisely for one who 'comes to himself', sees himself as 'situated' in a particular way in the universe, and who both articulates and develops this disclosure as he tries to match his experience in language appropriate to it.

> Every disclosure arises in some context which is characterized by models, and it is from these models that there arise suggestions for being articulate about God. Our discourse will be the more reliable the more models we have surveyed, and the better we have related the model-based articulation to the world so as to provide what I have called 'empirical fit'.[83]

In this brief statement of the connection between disclosure and models, between 'model-based articulation' and its 'empirical fit' with the world, we have in its essentials the theme of the following chapter.

---

[82] 1960:3, "Some Further Reflections . . .", p. 354.

[83] 1965:4, "The Intellectual Crisis . . .", p. 110.

Chapter III: The Concept of a Disclosure Model

page
1. Models and Reliable Discourse. 109

1.1 'Understanding' and 'Experience' 110
1.2 Models 114
1.21 Models and Understanding 116
1.3 Qualifiers 121
1.31 Twofold Function of Qualifiers 122
1.32 Qualifiers and Operators 126
1.33 Importance of Qualifiers 130
1.331 Qualifiers and Analysis. 131
1.332 Qualifiers and Transcendence 134
1.4 Multi-Model Discourse. 136
1.41 Wide Range of Models 138
1.42 Grading and Criteria of Preference 141
1.421 Complementarity of Models. 145
1.5 Disclosure Models and Verification 151
1.51 Verification and 'Empirical Fit' 152

2. Models and Mystery 160

2.1 Intelligibility and Mystery. 161
2.11 Disclosure, Models, Mystery. 162
2.12 Understanding, Insight, Imagination. 166
2.2 Mystery and Worship. 168
2.3 Theology and Religious Commitment. 172
2.31 'Theology' and 'Religion'. 174
2.311 Probability and Conviction 176
2.312 Theology: Understanding and Worship 181

CHAPTER III

THE CONCEPT OF A DISCLOSURE MODEL

Having traced his development of the concept of disclosure situation, we must now try to do the same for 'disclosure model'. In the former case we were concerned with the concept of experience which characterized his empiricism, and now the interest shifts to the kind of understanding which this empiricism sponsors and requires. We have already had some indication of the type of discussion to expect in this chapter, which will be divided into two sections. In the first of these, we will pursue our inquiry into the reliability of disclosures, while in the second we will probe the understanding which Ramsey offers us of transcendence and the marriage he proposes between intelligibility and mystery.

1. Models and Reliable Discourse

Before taking up specific questions about models we must try to take a more general view of the way in which 'understanding' and 'experience' (as he interprets them) fit together, or the way in which we can reliably articulate 'experience', again in his sense. We may best do this by considering, if only briefly, the initial position which he took on this question, where he laid the groundwork for his theory of disclosure models.

1.1 'Understanding' and 'Experience'

In his early papers, before he had sharpened his thinking on the subject with the help of 'disclosures' and 'models', he raised questions about the relation between fact and language, between facts and our interpretation of them—questions in which he challenged the traditional severance of the two, just as we have seen him challenge the traditional concept of experience. To support his argument he cites instances of recent developments in Physics and Biblical Theology where it has been found necessary to adopt a quite different view of the place to be allotted to 'the facts' in these disciplines. In both cases he suggests that the ideal of detachment and objectivity is not merely impossible of achievement, but that it actually misrepresents 'the facts', in the full sense of that term. He singles out as a most significant change the fact that

> contemporary physics is much more concerned with the physicist and his experience, is much more concerned with the contribution of the physicist to his physical theory, than ever the Newtonian outlook dare imagine.[1]

Likewise in Biblical Theology,

> oral tradition has suggested that the gospels are to be understood in the setting of preaching and teaching. It has suggested that we shall better know the 'facts' when we have better understood the relation of those 'facts' to contemporary observers, when indeed we have formulated an epistemology more adequate than that of

---

[1] 1949:1, "Some Reflections . . .", p. 292.

Newton, borrowed, as it was, from Locke's Cartesianism.[2]

Understanding then, even at the initial level of ascertaining the facts, is an activity, and this unquestionable 'fact' is fraught with consequences for the view we take of the relationship between facts and language. Henceforth, objectivity cannot be construed in terms of independent access to the facts, since no such access is available to us. What we have instead is an inquiring mind, whether of physicist or of biblical theologian, actively engaged with an entire situation, certain prominent aspects of which are singled out as 'significant data'. It is Ramsey's contention that these aspects, which are ordinarily dignified with the title of ''facts', are not sufficiently 'basic'—in the sense of 'merely given'—to merit the primary claim on that word, which is better reserved for the much more basic 'fact' of the common context. His claim, then, is that the subject's own active engagement in experience is the primitive Fact—"the Given for any particular person"—and that what are commonly referred to as 'facts' are no more than particular aspects of the given 'whole'.[3] Indeed, they are not so much 'facts' as 'Interprefacts', an ugly word for the important claim that the so-called 'hard facts', dear to the empiricist, are not free of interpretation since they are accepted, grouped and organized by the understanding in its endeavour to articulate something of the basic Fact, the primitive Given. Such 'interprefacts' are the proper concern of the different sciences,[4] but they represent, as we have said, in each case only a particular characterization of the whole, and it is towards an understanding of this, the common context and source of all their questions, that they tend. In short, his suggestion is that "the fundamental encounter", which he proposes as the primitive Fact of experience,

---

[2] 1949:1, "Some Reflections . . .", p. 296.

[3] Ibid., p. 298.

> might be the common study of physics and theology alike. Each needs to see that it is only concerned, as a study, with _interprefacts_, with organized spatio-temporal particulars; and yet that these are set within a more _concrete_ experience of which neither science, nor theology, nor any discursive knowledge, could ever hope to give more than a progressively less superficial account.[5]

Discouragingly obscure as this may be, we can recognize the importance of the point he is trying to make; we may also perhaps be grateful that he found a somewhat simpler way of making it.

What he intends by 'interprefacts' seems to be better expressed by speaking of "the conceptual scheme which accompanies the facts".[6] True, he does not have much to say about such a scheme, but this may be because it is more readily discussed in terms of 'models'. All we need notice at this stage is that whether he speaks of 'interprefacts', 'conceptual schemes' or 'models', he is making essentially the same claim, which is that an appeal to facts is not a simple straightforward matter of setting the record straight. The understanding is instead quite actively involved in determining what the facts are. This activity presupposes that one is sensitive to the situation which forms a context for the facts on which attention is being fixed. This is what he means by saying that

---

[4] For a fuller statement of this cf. _Ibid_., pp. 298-299.

[5] _Ibid_., p. 299. Cf. 1951:1, "Science and Religion", p. 12: "all our experience is an interchange between God's will and our will. It's a creaturely relationship between ourselves and God, because we're part of his creation, and it's this encounter with God, which both science and theology try to understand."

> any claim for objectivity stands or falls with the reliability of the conceptual scheme in terms of which the 'object' is talked about;[7]

and that the elucidation of a concept, such as of the authority of the Church,

> must always involve a reference to the conceptual scheme which accompanies the facts, and this scheme will certainly have a further and distinctive point to make, a point which goes beyond those 'facts' as such.[8]

What is important is that in our understanding and articulation of what is experienced—and it would be better now simply to say disclosed—in a situation, we take care not

[6] 1965:5, "The Authority of the Church . . .", p. 76.

[7] 1965:4, "The Intellectual Crisis . . .", p. 110.

[8] 1965:5, "The Authority of the Church . . .", p. 76.

to misrepresent 'the given whole' by attending only to what can be talked about in the approved language of the passive observer. The situation which forms the context of our effort to understand also provides the source from which our understanding issues, since it suggests certain models, certain ways of seeing, which direct the inquiry towards a fuller grasp of the whole. We now turn to a closer consideration of what all these epistemological caveats might mean by examining what they entail.

1.2 Models

A model, in Ramsey's most general use of the term, is "a manner of speaking",[9] a way of understanding and talking about something for which familiar categories are not immediately available.

> The great virtue of a model is that it enables us to be articulate when before we were tongue-tied.[10]

In this way of looking at it, a model is a linguistic device enabling us to work our way towards some understanding of what is disclosed, and it does so by exploiting the possibilities for suitable development that lie to hand in everyday words which mark out the ground from which our effort to understand must begin.

> First we shall look for one word on which everyone will agree; one word which can be understood descriptively,

---

[9] 1963: Review 1, Maclagan . . ., p. 297.

[10] 1964:1, Models and Mystery, p. 13.

> something to give an intelligible route into the disclosure of mystery, something to enable us to be as articulate as possible about it afterward. Here is the model. It is like all models at least in this regard, viz. it is something about which we are reasonably clear by which to understand something which is very problematical.[11]

It would be a mistake, however, to think of a model merely as a linguistic device, as a temporary remedy for a deficiency in language. Far from being a defect, our recourse to models brings language into vital contact with its empirical sources, and enables it through such contact to become increasingly more adequate to its task. Models then are not picturesque ways of saying what might be said more laboriously; rather they exploit the richly contextual character of language by bringing diverse contexts to play upon one another. Indeed in Ramsey's use of the term, models are often so closely related to the contexts which shape and situate language as to be identified with them. Thus we find Ramsey speaking of a model as

> a situation with which we are all familiar, and which can be used for reaching another situation with which we are not so familiar; one which, without the model, we should not recognize so easily.[12]

In the light of our previous analysis of 'experience' and of 'disclosure situation', this emphasis is not to be taken lightly; his theory of models is continuous with his theory of experience, and his concept of disclosure model is not to be understood apart from this:

---

[11] 1963:3, "Theological Literacy", p. 7.

[12] 1957:1, Religious Language, p. 69.

> my use of the word 'model'[13] is a somewhat technical one. A theological model is a way of understanding what has been objectively disclosed in a cosmic disclosure; like all models it is never a perfect replica; but it is further and most importantly unlike ordinary 'picturing models' (for example, the boy's model-train) in that its objective reference is never given independently of the model. It is indeed what I have called a 'disclosure model', a type of model not without its parallels in science and elsewhere.[14]

It is this technical use and its implications that we will now try to explore.

1.21 Models and Understanding

It has come to be recognized that the understanding to which a scientific inquiry leads, and the way in which we achieve it, is somewhat different from earlier conceptions of the matter. Previously it was thought that the aim of science was to provide a detailed and ever more accurate account—picture—of reality, of 'what the facts are'. When more attention came to be given to the actual behaviour, if we may call it that, of scientific language, particularly to the dominant part played by models, it became evident that science was not as straightforward a matter of displaying the facts as had hitherto been thought. This at least is how Ramsey evaluates the present situation, and his whole programme of analysis is the fruit of this evaluation; scientists have been brought to a better understanding of what they are about by having been forced to reconsider the entire question of what their models 'meant', and he urges the importance of the same task on theologians.

---

[13] Ramsey has chosen the word 'model' deliberately, in preference to 'image', 'parable', 'analogy', and the like. In a note appended to the beginning of the paper cited below, he writes: "My preference is for the word 'model' because, by virtue of its wider use in contemporary philosophical discussion, it carries with it natural logical overtones and takes us at once into a logical context. By contrast with 'model', 'image' seems to me to have too strong a psychological ancestry, and to beg or to bypass too many epistemological and ontological questions." Ibid., p. 76, n. 2. His preference for 'model' over 'analogy' can be argued along similar lines, as John McIntyre suggests in The Shape of Christology (1966), pp. 63, 65-67; in any case, he thinks 'model' carries with it less metaphysical baggage: "I see my theory as a more generalized form of Aquinas' doctrine of analogy, but it depends less than his did on a kind of background metaphysics". (Ved Mehta, "The New Theologian", The New Yorker 41 (Nov. 20, 1965), p. 137.)

[14] 1966:1, "Talking about God . . .", p. 89.

> The whole of my argument presupposes a new era in science, a new way of theorizing in terms of models; and I shall argue that the result is to make science not a picture language about the universe, but a collection of distinctive, reliable, and easily specifiable techniques for talking about a universe which is ultimately mysterious; and further, that the revolution in science is not without its lessons for theology.[15]

We may recall that his earlier reflections on the lessons to be learned from recent developments in physics and theology led him to insist upon 'the duality-in-unity' of experience and the active contributions which the inquirer himself makes to the theory—the understanding—which his observations yield. Now his attention is fixed on the

[15] 1964:1, Models and Mystery, p. 4.

the workings of understanding itself, and in his examination of the leading role taken by models in this connection he seems to be insisting on essentially the same point, but in a way that may be more satisfactory. In any case, we have to try and determine now what he understands by "the new way of theorizing in terms of models", and what its lessons are for theology.

In the classical, nineteenth century view models were extrinsic to the understanding at which science aimed; they were regarded simply as imagined or artificially constructed entities whose sole purpose was that of

> reproducing identically those properties common to model and original which, for the particular purpose in mind, are importantly relevant.[16]

Their function, then, was to underline, or bring into sharp relief, certain features which were judged to be "importantly relevant . . . for the purpose in mind". But much more than this needed to be said. The illustrative role, which is given prominence here, is not the only nor the most important point to be appreciated about models. Besides illustration, and indeed prior to it, there is the recognition of similarities (amid differences), and on a closer consideration of this we come to a somewhat different estimate of the part played by models in the effort to understand. Interest has now shifted to the process of discover-

[16] 1964:1, Models and Mystery, p. 3.

ing and accepting appropriate models, and as a consequence we now find ourselves thinking not in terms of their correspondence with the original, but in terms of the contribution they make to the development of our understanding. In other words, models are no longer to be thought of as replicas or reproductions, but as steps taken in the movement towards understanding, so that their point of reference is not extrinsic to our understanding. This may be put more simply still, perhaps, by saying that the point of a model is what it enables us to see and to say with respect to a certain phenomenon or situation 'x', the reproduction of common or identical features of 'x' being simply the means to this end. Thus Ramsey writes,

> let us take as an alternative to the concept of a picturing model, a concept of a model which . . . stands somewhere between a picture and a formula, which deals in hints rather than in identities, what Black calls an 'analogue model', what I shall presently call a disclosure model.[17]

The emphasis on hints rather than on identities is what is most significant, since it points further discussion of models in the direction we have been indicating. Hints have first of all to be recognized as such and then allowed to lead us to a further point of recognition, and the importance of the model lies precisely in its power to lead in this way, to evoke insight.

---

[17] 1964:1, Models and Mystery, p. 9. Ramsey has acknowledged his indebtedness to Max Black's Models and Metaphors (1962), and noted the common influence of I. A. Richards on their thinking about metaphor.

> Now my reason for preferring the title 'disclosure model' is this. Black rightly emphasizes the point that there must be some sort of structural similarity, some sort of echo between the model and the phenomena it enables us to understand, while at the same time denying (as we would) sheer reproduction, replica picturing. But it is precisely such similarity-with-a-difference that generates insight, that leads to disclosures when (as we say) 'the light dawns'.[18]

On this view, models are thought of not simply as aids to facilitate understanding, but as integral to the process of coming to understand. One consequence of this has been to enrich the concept we have of understanding, calling attention in particular to the important advances made through a fruitful interplay of contexts. Thus we have

> a more generous concept of understanding—one which thinks primarily of the illumination which can come through a display of contexts.[19]

Another consequence is that models, on this way of taking them, maintain the understanding in fruitful contact with the situation in which it first arose. The recognition of the appropriateness of a model and the insight it is capable of sponsoring, are a function of the inquirer's participation in the context or situation:

> we need to remind ourselves constantly of that moment of insight in which the model was born, that occasion of participation from which it took its rise.[20]

[18] 1964:1, Models and Mystery, p. 10.

[19] 1965:3, "Contemporary Philosophy . . .", p. 57.

[20] 1964:1, Models and Mystery, p. 26.

In other words, models function well when they serve to put us in contact with the disclosure situation which is their source and context.

Each of these consequences brings into prominence some of the most significant features which Ramsey incorporates into his theory of models, and we will examine them in turn. Before doing so, however, we have to examine his attempts to delineate a logic of models: the ways in which models, as he understands them, contribute to a pattern of reasoning which leads to insight. Here we have the topic of Qualifiers, on Ramsey's view an essential complement to models.

1.3 Qualifiers

Ramsey's enthusiasm for models is matched only by his insistence on the need for caution in their development. He is particularly insistent that theology should have

> a better understanding of its metaphysical language, and also a better grip and criterion for the use of its models.[21]

The point is an important one and not at all restricted to the kind of understanding sought in theology; it is Ramsey's contention that the basic vocabulary of any science requires careful handling, and if taken in too literal and wooden a sense it will lead to unnecessary logical puzzles:

> both scientists and theologians should be much more alert to the peculiar character of their own language, and especially in their ready recognition of models

---

[21] 1963: Review 1, Maclagan . . ., p. 298.

> which are basic to theology and science alike. In both areas oversight in this matter can lead to misunderstandings and logical disaster.[22]

Our interest is in "the peculiar character" of theological language as Ramsey sees it, and the further exploration of this requires that close attention be given to 'qualifiers'

> whose presence in theology is an absolute *sine qua non*, declaring the inadequacy of all models.[23]

Indeed it may safely be said that, next to his concept of disclosure (and it is of course closely connected with it), the concept of qualifier or qualified model is the one on which he draws most heavily and with the most rewarding results.

In this section, then, we will try to explain what he means by qualifiers, giving special attention to the role he fashions for them in the analysis of what he calls the peculiar logic of theological language.

1.31 Twofold Function of Qualifiers

Speaking roughly, and for the sake of situating the discussion, we may say that a qualifier, as Ramsey uses the term, is a phrase, adjective or even prefix, which 'qualifies' (modifies) a linguistic expression or 'model'. The analogy is with the grammatical qualification of nouns by adjectives, the difference being that here we have to do with logical and semantical 'qualifiers'. The distinction between grammatical and logical form is fundamental here: since their role is that of 'logical qualifiers' these words are not to be read as if they were intended to furnish further or more precise descriptions.[24] An example will help to make this clear.

---

[22] 1965:2, "Biology and Personality . . . .", p. 193.

[23] 1964:1, *Models and Mystery*, p. 60.

The sentence 'God is omnipotent' is grammatically similar to the sentence 'the President is exceedingly powerful', but its logical form is quite different.[25] It is Ramsey's argument that a logical analysis of the God-sentence, that is to say an analysis which will display the reasoning process from which it issues, will show that it is intended to make a claim which is explicitly unique. If we attend to the kind of sentences to which it is grammatically similar we will notice that they can be related to each other on a scale of comparison, or as members of a sequence which is tending towards a 'limit', and this 'limit' is represented as 'omnipotence'. Thus we have, for instance, the following possible variations on the theme 'x is powerful': nominally powerful, hardly powerful, quite powerful, definitely powerful, very powerful, most powerful, exceptionally powerful, extraordinarily powerful —all apparently pointing in the direction of the ultimate in 'powerfulness', viz. all-powerful, omnipotent. On this interpretation then, 'all-powerful' stands in a unique relationship to each and all of the uses of 'powerful' in the sequence; it is proposed not as another—even the final—term in the sequence, and therefore as the most extravagant description possible of 'x' in terms of 'power', but as a limit to the sequence which defines or directs the ordering of the terms, though not itself a member or product of the sequence. It is evident that he is exploiting a mathematical parallel here, and we will presently look at this a little more closely. At the moment our concern must be to explicate the role of logical qualifiers as it is exhibited in this example.

---

[24] Cf. 1957:1, Religious Language, p. 191.

[25] Cf. 1956:2, "The Paradox of Omnipotence", pp. 263-266.

The limit to the sequence, we said, is represented as 'omnipotence', which Ramsey calls a qualified model. How are we to understand this? What is meant by saying that the model is qualified, and what is the relationship of model and qualifier to the sequence? We may approach an answer in this way. In the sentence 'God is omnipotent', we are to read 'omnipotent', not as a description or assessment of God's power as compared with less powerful beings, but as a word whose primary purpose is to make a logical point. According to the grammatical form of the sentence, 'God' is the subject of whom 'omnipotence' is predicated; but a careful logical analysis reveals quite a different structure. The sentence is to be understood, according to

Ramsey, only with respect to a sequence of sentences such as the one suggested above. To grasp the sense of the predication (and hence of the sentence) is to incorporate the entire sequence and announce an intent which carries us beyond any and all of the instances to an 'infinitely different', yet related, use of 'powerful'. This is what is meant by saying that 'omnipotent', or 'all-powerful', is a qualified model. We can speak of it as a model because 'powerful' specifies a set of conditions which we can understand, yet they are to be understood in a particular way, a way which is specified by the qualifier 'omni-' or 'all-'. The qualifier indeed holds the key to the whole analysis. It alerts us to the fact that the claim made about God's power is to be understood only in relation to, as well as by contrast with, all the possible uses of 'powerful' which can find a place in the sequence: in relation to these, because they furnish the model; by contrast with them because there is an essential break in the continuity of the sequence when we pass from 'extraordinarily powerful' to 'all-powerful'. The qualifier therefore has a twofold function: it serves as a rubric telling how we are to relate the sequence and the qualified model, and it gives emphasis to the break in continuity between the sequence and the qualified model. By accentuating the break in continuity, the qualifier forcibly reminds us that we have to deal with words of a different logical type.

The precise function of qualifiers may be clarified by considering more closely the parallel he has suggested between qualifiers and operators in mathematics.

1.32 Qualifiers and Operators

Ramsey's introduction of the concept of a logical qualifier which 'operates on', directs or controls the development of a model or models, is a quite explicit application to theological language of a mathematical technique used in the generation of an infinite series.

> The qualifiers gear into models, they intersect with models, like operators or directives gear in the terms in (sic) which they relate.[26]

In this section we will consider some of the ways in which he has developed the parallel between qualifiers and operators, and in the following try to fix its importance, as he sees it, for theological language.

(a) We may begin with one of his favourite examples. If we develop a sequence of regular polygons whose sides—the area remaining approximately constant—are progressively increased 'to infinity', we are led at some point to break off the series and speak simply of an 'infinite polygon' or, more simply, of 'a circle'. In other words, 'infinite polygon' is a mathematical instance of a qualified model: it directs the development of the polygon sequence towards the point of insight when we recognize that an

---

[26] 1963:3, "Theological Literacy', p. 9.

'infinite polygon' is not another polygon, but in actual fact 'a circle'. The qualifier 'infinite' at one and the same time grounds the analysis of 'infinite polygon' in the familiar situation of a sequence of polygons to be developed to infinity, and at the same time "effects and represents" a change in logical type.

> It is the function of mathematical logic and analysis to provide some sort of reasonable bridge between the sequences and the words whose logic is problematically odd; between 'polygon' and 'circle', 'point' and 'curve', the given series and '2'; to do something to display the logic of the move which the qualifier 'infinite' effects and represents.[27]

Here we have in essence the twofold importance of qualifiers, on the one hand directing a model toward the point of insight or disclosure, and on the other making an important point about the language appropriate to the situation, and the change in its logical form.

(b) Other instances of a suggestive similarity between the logic of mathematical and theological language propose the same moral.

> 'Infinite' as a theologian would use it, is not at all unlike its use in mathematics in relation to generated sequences for which a word of odd logic is posited at the end in relation to what could be called 'mathematical insight'. 'Infinite goodness' has a structure not all that unlike 'infinite sum' or 'infinite polygon', and if we wish to have some clues as to the logical placing of the word 'God', we may be helped by reflection on the relation between 'circle' and the polygon stories . . .[28]

---

[27] 1956:2, "The Paradox of Omnipotence", pp. 264-265.

[28] 1957:1, Religious Language, pp. 79-80.

His point is the oft repeated one that words like 'infinite', 'eternal' and the like, which abound in theology, are not without their logical counterparts in mathematics, and the same care should be exercised in their use and analysis in theology as is readily accorded them in mathematics. As an example of a parallel in mathematics to the theologian's use of 'eternal' we may cite his discussion of the phrase 'eternal procession of the Logos'. He argues that 'eternal' is used to qualify the model 'procession' in such a way as to safeguard the unity of the Logos with God (the word with the speaker) while permitting the distinction or difference between them to be articulated.

> On this view 'eternal' will qualify 'procession' something like 'continuous' can qualify certain mathematical functions. If we take two values of a 'continuous' function, then however near they be together, there is always a value between. The procedure may be repeated and repeated again and again until there is what we have called a 'disclosure', until there dawns on us that 'unity', that which can be regarded as the empirical cashing of the word 'continuous'. So with the Logos. To talk of eternal procession by no means denies the terms of the sequence. It by no means denies that the Logos is now here and now there. But 'eternal' tells such a story about these positionings that there is evoked a disclosure situation, when there dawns on us also a 'sense of unity', a 'kinship', a 'togetherness': everything indeed that we mean by the Logos as immanent. So are the two aspects of the Logos held together. Just as we have certain functions taking certain particular values, so we have also an immanent Logos which also goes forth; and parallel to that connection between the function and its values, of which the word 'continuous' speaks, is the relation between God and Jesus of which the phrase 'eternal procession' speaks.[29]

---

[29] 1957:1, Religious Language, pp. 189-190.

Yet another example which makes the point of such comparisons even more cogently, is his analysis of 'eternal generation of the Son' as a qualified model:

> 'eternal generation' no more talks of a sort of generation than 'infinite sum' specifies a sort of sum; both are means of specifying the complex logical geography of certain symbols. In this case, the symbol with a very complex logical geography is 'the Son'.[30]

(c) In Freedom and Immortality he develops at length yet another interesting instance of the way in which "the paradoxical language of mathematics may illuminate the paradoxical language of theology":

> My suggestion here is that the use of 'End' in theological language about 'immortality' is reminiscent of the use of 'limit' in mathematical language about (say) a function of a positive integral variable. For example, the sequence 1/2, 2/3, 3/4, 4/5 . . . approaches ever closer to, it tends to, the limit 1; 1 is a concept which somehow expresses the character of the sequence, and we might even call it the end of the sequence. But the never-ending sequence never reaches it; it never includes 1 as one of its terms.[31]

The case is the same, logically, with concepts like 'the End', the 'Last Things', as it is with '1'. 'The End' or 'the Second Coming' is not to be thought of as an expected historical event which will close a very long sequence of historical events; it is a word of a different logical type and is therefore to be understood in a quite different way. Indeed, we come to understand what it means, as we come to understand the 'limit' of an infinite series, in a disclosure situation where it dawns on us what the point of talk about the 'limit' and 'the End' is.

---

[30] Ibid., p. 184.

[31] 1960:2, Freedom and Immortality, pp. 120-121.

> Such phrases . . . show that what is important about the sequence is not that it goes on and on and on, but that it is meant to picture a disclosure, in relation to which . . . phrases like 'the End' or 'Last Things', as well as the serial language associated with them, are alone properly understood.[32]

1.33 Importance of Qualifiers

Such comparisons need not be laboured further. Whatever else may be said of the parallel between qualifiers and operators, it has provided us with a useful tool for the exploration of 'the peculiar logic' of theological language. In particular, by putting emphasis on the twofold function of qualifying phrases it has called our attention to two essential characteristics of that language which we neglect at our peril. On the one hand, qualifiers establish a purely logical point about theological language and the way in which it is to be understood, and, on the other, they direct the development of that language to the point of disclosure, which is the point of its fulfilment in a 'characteristically religious situation'. We must now try to show somewhat more explicitly what lies behind each of these claims.

[32] 1960:2, Freedom and Immortality, pp. 123-124.

1.331 Qualifiers and Analysis

Perhaps the most important, certainly the most interesting, suggestion to come from his comparison of theological and mathematical language is that, at least in those areas where the analogy holds, the analysis of theological language can best proceed in the formal mode. In other words, qualifiers are to be taken, initially, as logical signposts instructing us as to how we ought to proceed in our analysis, as guides to the logical syntax of theological language. The use of the word 'initially' is important, since it is not at all Ramsey's wish to confine his analysis to the formal mode; but he does think it profitable to begin the analysis on that level, the 'odd' logical structure of theological language being an important clue to its meaning. By 'theological language' is meant here language in which 'God' is the key word, and the purpose of a formal study of it would be to come to a better understanding of how this word comes to be used in the way it is. The point being made here is that it would be wise to approach theology first of all as a language, for "theology is after all only our way of talking about God".[33] It would be wise to do so, because we could then cultivate a due appreciation of the difference between 'God' and God, between systematic statements whose point can best be

[33] 1957:1, Religious Language, p. 84.

taken in the formal mode, and sentences in the material mode whose point is not linguistic so much as 'religious'; in the latter case, it is the living situation in which these sentences arise that is of interest, not their position and value in a language system. There is as yet no more than the suggestion of a distinction here; but we may note, by way of illustration, one instance of a systematic statement whose meaning, so it would seem, can best be elucidated in the formal mode. The sentence 'God is immanent and transcendent' is a classic of philosophical theology, indeed it is

> the crucial theological paradox. But it is for the most part a proposition about the use of words, viz.: how can the word 'God' be united with words like 'table', 'human beings', 'goodness', 'evil', 'beauty', and so on ('immanent') and yet be a word of unique logical status different in its logical behaviour from all other nouns? This latter is at one and the same time the claim of 'transcendence', and the point of the ontological argument.[34]

Suffice it to note here the direction in which his theory of qualifiers is taking us, particularly as he presses the analogy between their logical task and that of mathematical operators, imperatives, and the like. Qualifiers are not ingredients of a description, and therefore are not to be read in the material mode; indeed, in so far as their main function is to direct our attention away from typically descriptive language we may say that they are least likely to

[34] 1959:1, "Paradox in Religion", p. 209.

be misunderstood if we interpret them in the formal mode.

> Now there may be occasions when we wish to highlight these qualifiers, these operators which safeguard 'God' from being a word in descriptive scientific discourse, and to do this we may coin such slogans or mnemonics as are concisely expressed in phrases like 'God is up there', 'God is infinite', and so on. But such slogans are open to grave misunderstanding, since they are likely to be wrongly construed, and then set in a context which parodies them. . . . There is a great danger of assimilating 'God is up there' with 'John is up there' (said when John is at the 88th floor); of assimilating 'God is infinite' with 'the leaf is green', as though it ascribed a characteristic to a 'thing'. On the contrary, qualifier-sentences being, as I have suggested, slogans or mnemonics 'say' virtually nothing in the sense in which 'the cat is on the mat' 'says' a very great deal. The sentence 'God is up there' is much more like a rule about operators such as
>
> $$\frac{\delta^2}{\delta x^2} = \frac{\delta}{\delta x}\left(\frac{\delta}{\delta x}\right),$$
>
> from which all reference to what is operated on is absent. Perhaps it is already clear, however, that theology cannot be restricted to its qualifiers without being virtually uninformative and irrelevant.[35]

We may be grateful for this last remark. Whatever we may think of the logical task he assigns to qualifiers—and it is best to postpone judgment on this until his whole method has been unfolded—they have another and equally important role, that of linking models and disclosures, and ensuring in this way that theology will be both informative and relevant.

> When it is a matter of saying a great deal, when it is a matter of being relevant, theology turns to its models. It takes its models from the contexts on which qualifiers have worked to yield disclosures.[35]

[35] 1965:1, Christian Discourse, pp. 79-80.

[36] Ibid., p. 80.

1.332 Qualifiers and Transcendence

Transcendence and mystery are topics which properly belong to the second half of this chapter, and are touched on here only to underline the central importance of qualifiers in their regard also. As Ramsey has put it,

> qualifiers in religious discourse are the words which save not the appearances but the transcendence.[37]

> All models in theology must be accompanied by qualifiers, those words in theological language which preserve the mystery and transcendence of God, for example, 'perfect', 'all', 'only', and so forth.[38]

We know enough of the way in which qualifiers operate to see what he means by these remarks. Their task is not to specify still further the analogy being suggested by a model, to restrict its scope in this way in the interests of greater precision: this we would expect from straightforward grammatical qualification, for instance by an adjective or adjectival phrase. Rather they qualify a model in such a way as to set it off as logically unique, developing it as we have said to the point of disclosure where we are brought to see what, without the prompting and directing of the model by the qualifier, cannot be said.

> (Their) purpose is to point us unmistakably to the cosmic disclosure in which all talk about God must be grounded. Take, for instance, the qualifier 'infinitely' in 'God is infinitely loving'. It may be thought to be merely a formal courtesy phrase or even

---

[37] 1965:1, Christian Discourse, p. 79.

[38] 1966:1, "Talking about God . . .", p. 94.

> a disingenuous addition to bypass intellectual difficulties. It might be supposed that 'God is loving' says all that is important to preserve—something which is clear and relevant. But 'God is loving' is just as inadequate and as incomplete a theological assertion as 'God is infinite'—though both are relevant. The first generates discourse which . . . enables theology to be intelligible and to fit the world, and the second points us to the transcendence and mystery of a cosmic disclosure.[39]

Perhaps enough has been said now to bring out the importance of qualifiers and also to indicate some of the difficulties which lie at the heart of his method of analysis, difficulties to which we will have to return in our overall evaluation. Some of these difficulties may have been occasioned, however, at least in part, by the fact that we have chosen, for the purposes of a clearer presentation, to isolate his discussion of qualifiers from the closely related topics of models and disclosures. This must now be remedied, since in the end qualifiers are to be understood only to the extent that they engage models and disclosures in discourse.

> It is true that by themselves qualifiers describe nothing, and for that reason may be thought to be utterly irrelevant theological jargon. But they are in fact words or phrases whose relevance is to be found in the cosmic disclosure to which, when they have models to qualify, they point.[40]

We return then to the main theme of the chapter, viz. the relationship between models and disclosures. Before commencing the section on qualifiers, we noted two important consequences of his theory of models, which we must now try to develop in the light of what we have learned both about disclosures and qualifiers. The first of these consequences had to do with a richer concept of understanding,

---

[39] 1966:1, "Talking about God . . .", p. 95.

[40] *Ibid.*,

> one which thinks primarily of the illumination which can come through a display of contexts;[41]

and in the following section we will examine what he has to say about the way in which our discourse is built up out of a fruitful interplay of contexts, or models. The other consequence was that understanding is as much a participation in a situation as it is a seeing, and in the subsequent section we will return to this when we consider the way in which he links models and disclosure situations, as he moves to meet the question of empirical control over the working of discourse as he conceives its working.

1.4 Multi-Model Discourse

We resume the theme of models with particular emphasis on the relationship between the different models found to be necessary in the same discourse. In religious discourse we contrive to articulate the faith that is in us, to develop a language which is appropriate to the mystery on which faith bears, and our only means of doing this is to exploit the different possibilities which our native language offers us. These possibilities take shape as first one model then another suggests itself, the one sometimes supplementing, sometimes correcting the suggestions of the other.[42] Care must always be exercised not to lean too heavily on the suggestions of any one model.

---

[41] 1965:3, "Contemporary Philosophy . . .", p. 57. Cf. supra 1.21, p. 120.

> It is to models that we must look when we want to be articulate about the mystery to which with the qualifiers they enable us to reach. But the fact that we have but models, which never exhaust the mystery, models which inevitably provide only partial understandings, means that sooner or later inferences from these models become precarious. We then need to balance one model with its associated context against another model with its associated context.[43]

Here we have, then, the problem of this section: given the need for many models, how are we guided in our selection of them? What criteria can we invoke for preferring this model rather than that, or for proposing (let us say) two models as complementary to each other, when, on the face of it, they seem scarcely compatible?

[42] 1964:1, Models and Mystery, p. 35. 1967:1, "Models and Mystery", Discussion . . ., p. 266: "Theological discourses (sic), in its full flourish, arises as multi-model discourse which has been developed from a countless number of models by uniting into the most comprehensive, consistent, coherent and simple discourse all the elemental theology which each and every model supplies."

[43] 1963:3, "Theological Literacy", p. 9. Cf. 1965:3, "Contemporary Philosophy . . .", p. 58: "Rather must discourse about God develop by balancing the articulations from one model against those from another . . . It is in this way that we must learn how to talk about God, but more importantly, how and when not to talk about God." Compare with this what Austin Farrer has had to say about "the art of balancing parables", e.g. in "A Starting Point for the Philosophical Examination of Theological Belief", in Faith and Logic, ed. B. Mitchell (1957), pp. 10-11.

1.41 Wide Range of Models

The strength of any model is its ability to simplify a complex situation without misrepresenting it. Yet the complexity may be such that no one model, no one simplification, will suffice; a range of models would perhaps better equip us to cope with it. Ramsey cites as an illustration of this the conflict, experienced in social studies, between those who favour a 'strictly scientific', statistical, method of inquiry, and those who find this incompatible with the distinctively 'human' character of the subject matter.

> Scientific models . . . need constantly to be related to and supplemented by other models more characteristic of the social activity which is distinctively human. Indeed, by appealing to the use it makes of models, social studies, and this could include psychology, can meet, as far as is possible and legitimate, criticisms that their subject is too intricate and too complex to be treated scientifically. For the important point in the present context is that these very complications make it desirable to work in terms of the widest possible range of models. Here are models which, by their very partiality, bring order into conceptual disorder, and single out fundamental notions of the most diverse kinds.[44]

The case of theology, as we might have expected, is an even better illustration of this need for "the widest possible range of models".

---

[44] 1964:1, Models and Mystery, p. 35. Cf. 1965:3, "Contemporary Philosophy . . .", p. 57: "Certainly we must never suppose there is only one possible model; and we must certainly never run one model to death. Like the expert juggler, we must be sure to keep as many illuminating models in play at one time as is possible; like the explorer, we must bring to our aid every possible map."

The situation which, for Ramsey, is both source and context for all theology is nothing less than cosmic in character and scope, so that it almost seems as if any model might be usefully pressed into service. The essential claim he is making at this point is that theological language is of necessity complex, and furthermore that its complexity is to be seen as an index of its success in articulating the disclosure.

> To talk about what a cosmic disclosure discloses we shall need a never-ending succession of phrases which can combine in pairs to give a never-ending series of metaphorical inroads. In this way theology demands and thrives on a diversity of models; theological discourse must never be uniformly flat. Eccentricity, logical impropriety is its very life blood. The way theological discourse builds up from a subtle selectivity between those various areas of discourse which an endless number of metaphors and models bring with them is no 'death by a thousand qualifications'. Rather it is life by a thousand enrichments.[45]

The last remark catches precisely the crucial point of contrast between Ramsey's appreciation of 'qualifications' as constructive pointers and stimulants in theological discourse, and Flew's prosecution of them as futile attempts to evade his objections.[46] It is worth emphasizing this contrast, and we may do so by noticing one example of the way in which Ramsey illustrates the 'growth' of theological language as it draws on many different models.

---

[45] 1964:1, Models and Mystery, p. 60.

[46] See A. Flew, "Theology and Falsification", New Essays in Philosophical Theology, edd. Flew and MacIntyre (1955), p. 97.

> The language that is most reliable will be that discourse which is licensed by, and consistent with, the widest range of models. We can already see in broad outline the character of this multi-model discourse. It will speak of God as caring for, providing for, as guiding, testing, healing, and cleansing, as possessing a moral authority and calling forth a total devotion and response; and something of this same discourse might well be derived from impersonal models, for example, rock, fortress, shield. Because a model like Protector or Guide by being more fertile for providing discourse is more 'dominant' than models such as Shepherd and Potter, God will be more reliably spoken of as Protector and Guide than as Shepherd or even as both Shepherd and Potter. But we shall need to see the limitations of even these strands of discourse, and if we look for discourse which harmonizes these dominant strands in such a way as to exclude the limitations of each, we may well arrive at discourse about love or perhaps activity; when we shall conclude that God is spoken of most reliably as 'Love' or perhaps as just 'the living God'. The important point to recognize is that such characterizations of God as these are utterly valueless and positively misleading unless they are suitably contextualized in a multi-model discourse. It is a point which Professor Flew overlooked —or, worse, parodied—in his criticisms of talk about God's love in the Falsification controversy, and it is a point which few of his critics explicitly recognized.[47]

The question to which all of this leads us, however, must now be faced. How do these many models hang together within a single discourse? What criteria do we have for distinguishing appropriate from inappropriate models, and how do we justify a preference for one as more apt than another?

---

[47] 1966:1, "Talking about God . . .", pp. 84-85.

1.42 Grading and Criteria of Preference

Ramsey himself formulates the question in this way:

> if, as is the case, we have a vast variety of models for God, on what grounds do we grade models, and express a reasonable preference for one model rather than another?[48]

As might be expected, the question is more straightforward than the answer can ever hope to be. We are led to expect a relatively clear statement of the ground rules for grading models, and this is not forthcoming. There is talk of some models being 'more adequate', of discourse being 'more reliable', which seems not to answer the question of how we tell 'a more adequate' from 'a less adequate' model, nor how we satisfy ourselves as to 'reliability'. Inevitably we are brought back to the disclosure situation which sponsors the use of different models, and it is with reference to this that they are to be judged.

> A cosmic disclosure will in the one way or in the other supply a model as that alone which enables us to be articulate about what has disclosed itself to us. A cosmic disclosure will supply a model either because it has been generated by the use of the model, or because the situation itself high-lights a particular feature within it. Models are in this way and to this degree, but only in this way and to this degree, self-authenticating. If there is no model, there is no sensible articulation, and no test possible of the claim to have had a cosmic disclosure.[49]

Here we are being reminded once more of the almost organic unity he wishes to maintain between models and disclosure

[48] 1966:1, "Talking about God . . .", p. 86.

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 88.

situations. What should hold our interest at the moment, however, is the more specific question of how, granting the importance of the disclosure situation, we recognize the relative merits of different models, and what is involved in our ability to do so.

Any attempt to grade models must be consequent upon their having been used and having been compared in use, since the degree to which one is preferred to another is the degree to which it proves useful. It is not easy to avoid the appearance of circularity in this, yet there can really be no other standard by which to judge. The only merit a model can have is its usefulness, the promise it gives of increasing our ability to articulate what, without the model, we could say only with difficulty, if at all.

> I suggest that models may be usually divided as 'major' and 'minor' models and that the distinction could be made in respect of their discourse possibilities.[50]

He suggests that one of the tasks of systematic theology—and the same would hold to a degree of any 'systematic inquiry'—is to maintain control over the "discourse possibilities" which its models provide, and to integrate or at least harmonize them, developing a sensitivity to the different kinds of possibilities offered and to their respective limits.

[50] 1963:3, "Theological Literacy", p. 28.

> (Theology) will organize models on any one theme. It will grade the models on the basis of the range and reliability of the discourse to which a model leads, and it will try to do some cross-plotting, tracing connections, discovering incompatibilities, and so on.[51]

The scaling or mapping of models is done, we should notice, with an eye to "the range and reliability of the discourse to which a model leads": here it seems is the most persistent clue to the kind of standard by which he measures the aptness of a model. It is a standard which is itself determined, in a way we have to postpone considering for the moment, by its fidelity to the disclosure situation which sponsors it. What concerns us here is to understand how he conceives of theology proceeding with this task of organizing its models in the way he has suggested. We can best do this by considering briefly an example he himself offers.

> We will always look for more and more adequate models for talking about that mystery which is God. These will be discovered as and when we grade our models and discover super models. Let me illustrate that distinction like this: it is as though we might have talked usefully about something in terms of an ellipse one day, a parabola another, a hyperbola another, a circle another, a pair of straight lines another, a point another. We might then discover a double cone as a super model. Here will be a far more reliable way of talking about what hitherto we have only talked about piece-meal. What we have talked of will be better talked about as a double cone. Similarly, what is talked of in terms of power, wisdom, love, models of one order, may be better talked of in terms of the concept of a person—a model of a higher order. And, again, we shall be the more reliably articulate about the mystery, the more coherent our discourse is, the more we complete cross-plottings from one model to another. For instance, in the case of God, the models

---

[51] 1963:3, "Theological Literacy", p. 30.

> of King and Judge and Power may all lead us to talk of 'protection'.[52]

The suggestion that 'person' is a model of a higher order than 'power', 'wisdom' or 'love', needs careful handling. It is higher in the sense of being compatible with each yet more comprehensive than any of the three, and is therefore able to integrate what would otherwise be fragmentary, or at least loosely connected talk about "that mystery which is God" in terms of 'wisdom', 'power', 'love'. Similarly 'protection' pulls together the different suggestions of 'King', 'Judge', 'Power'. What we have here then are "models with family resemblances",[53] and these are grouped round, or cohere in, a super-model which brings into focus the point on which each of the 'submodels' converges. In this way the question of a model's aptness is settled, in part at least (since the disclosure reference is also to be taken into account), by its ability to take its place with other models in the discourse, in such a way as to complement these and advance the understanding to which they jointly contribute.

> Any particular model supplied by a particular cosmic disclosure will have to be incorporated with every other possible model, and this means that its articulation possibilities will have to be earned as it rubs its shoulders with other models. . . . We develop discourse from each model only with a constant eye on other models; at various points these other models

---

[52] 1963:3, "Theological Literacy", p. 9.

[53] 1964:1, *Models and Mystery*, p. 60.

> will supply stop cards to inhibit further discourse in that particular direction. Talk about God thus develops by a mingling of discourse from different models. Now the more a model can exist successfully in competition with other models, the more justifiably does it provide discourse about what the cosmic disclosure discloses. . . . A model like person is better than, say, shepherd or potter because it can say all that these other models can say and more besides; in this way it can absorb the discourse from two or more models.[54]

This discussion of the way models are judged to be suitable and profitable leads naturally to a fuller question: how do we determine that the discourse developed by their means is itself 'empirically' acceptable, that it 'fits' the disclosure situation? Before taking this up, however, let us examine a corollary to the foregoing which treats of the 'complementarity' of models.

1.421 Complementarity of Models

Ramsey introduces the theme of complementarity in two different contexts: a classical discussion in early Christian theology, and a question arising out of a broader discussion in philosophical theology. In each case there is question of "two logically different languages" being somehow shared by the same subject.[55] In the first case 'Jesus Christ' is the subject both of language appropriate to human existence and language appropriate only to God, and in the second, 'God' is spoken of in language where now

[54] 1966:1, "Talking about God . . .", pp. 89-90.

[55] 1957:1, Religious Language, pp. 190, 194.

non-personal, now personal, models dominate. A brief review of each case will help complete the presentation of this aspect of his theory of models.[56]

Interpreting the early Christological controversies as a struggle to find a way of combining, without confusing or collapsing, the two apparently opposed kinds of language that characterize the Christian disclosure situation, Ramsey represents orthodoxy as maintaining both in a unity for which the contemporary term is 'complementarity', the classical theological term being '*communicatio idiomatum*'. Many different attempts had to be made, many different models tried and found inadequate, before a technical term could be found which made possible this new way of articulating the mystery.

> Orthodoxy aimed at having every possible model, and it pressed each model into such service as it could give. To press any model was sure, however, to make evident sooner or later, its inadequacy. So we can see why the orthodoxy of one century became so near to being the heresy of the next. But in the end, and most necessary of all, orthodoxy sponsored a word such as 'hypostasis' which, resistant to any or all modelling, would be sure to preserve the mystery. So theology spends every philosophical model and more. It must necessarily in this sense exhibit a Chalcedonian bankruptcy: like many other people's banking accounts at the present time, it will only show an active healthy condition when its store of empirical models

---

[56] A useful introduction to the theme of complementarity in Theology is to be found in W. H. Austin's monograph, "Waves, Particles and Paradoxes", published in *Rice University Studies* 53 (Spring 1967). The same author discusses Ramsey's treatment of this matter in his article, "Models, Mystery, and Paradox in Ian Ramsey", *The Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 7 (1968), pp. 41-55.

> is overdrawn. For it has invisible assets—mystery—of which the models take no account.[57]

The doctrine (or theory) of 'hypostatic unity' provided just the technical term that was needed, enabling the theologian now to speak of God and Jesus in the same breath, as it were, without in any way collapsing the human into the divine (denying the humanity of Jesus), or the divine into the human (denying his divinity). These two apparently disparate ways of talking about the one object of any Christian disclosure situation—'Jesus is God' and 'Jesus is man'—are rendered compatible or, in a better way of putting it, complementary by being (as Ramsey expresses it) "qualified 'hypostatically'".[58] What he means by this rather awkward expression is that the technical term 'hypostatic unity' points up the logical uniqueness of the language occasioned by "the disclosure of God in Christ", and unites what we will call 'the human' and 'the divine' strands in our discourse by directing us to read each with reference to the one object of the disclosure which requires both.

> So the doctrine of communicatio idiomatum becomes the logical claim that two languages of different logical status can nevertheless be used of the one object of the Christian disclosure once they have been suitably qualified, and 'hypostasis' is proferred as a word which is enough of a logical oddity to bring these two languages together and provide a consistent language

---

[57] 1957:1, Religious Language, p. 198.

[58] Ibid., pp. 195-196.

> system for the Christian disclosure. The doctrine of communicatio idiomatum and the word 'hypostasis' may both be seen as an ancient attempt to deal with what nowadays would be called the problem of complementary languages and their unity, a problem which is raised especially by recent developments in scientific method.[59]

What is to be noted in this discussion of a problem of Christological language is his tendency again to insist upon the importance of the disclosure situation as the controlling factor in the elucidation of the language, and at the same time to interpret the specifically theological point as pointing out the peculiar logic of Christological language: to interpret it, in other words, in the formal mode. 'Hypostasis' is not another model, nor can it be translated for us with the help of models; on the contrary, it is a deliberately technical word whose only role is to bind the two strands in a logical unity.

> Let us emphasize that 'Hypostasis' would only be successful in unifying two languages if it is odd enough never to be given except by reference to a Christian disclosure situation. If it is to be the logical bond that Christian doctrine wishes it to be, it cannot be modelled. If it is to do this work it is quite impossible (*logically* impossible) to produce a model for it.[60]

Further discussion of this interesting and provocative suggestion belongs to the following chapter; it is touched on here only to illustrate the scope and subtlety of the theory of models which, at present, it is our task to unravel. For

[59] 1957:1, *Religious Language*, p. 196.

[60] *Ibid*.

the same reason we may be quite brief in alluding to the second, more philosophical question to which he proposes a similar kind of solution, viz. that it too be interpreted in the formal mode.

In a review article which we have already had occasion to cite, he writes:

> Admittedly the logic of religious discourse is bafflingly tortuous, with the logic of personality illuminating some parts of the discourse, and the logic of impersonal phrases like 'moral demand' illuminating other parts. But let us be sure that we do not make the problem even more baffling by posing it in the material mode . . . .[61]

The problem of reconciling or accounting for two different ways of speaking about God can easily mislead us if we fail to remember the distinction between 'God' and God. A number of questions will arise at the level of language which are requests for clarification on the way in which 'God' is being used, so that it will be a mistake to interpret such a question in the material mode, as if it were asking "how can God be both a person and not a person".

> It is rather as if a scientist of an older day asked: 'How can something—light—be both a wave and a particle?', instead of asking the much more tractable question: 'What is the logic of discourse about light when wave mechanics model part of the discourse, and particle mechanics the rest?'. What theologians have to do, if they are to avoid mere double-talk, is something like what Bohm has done (so I am told) in the wave-particle case by giving a harmonious mathematical treatment to what seem to be two disparate approaches. What theologians must do is to give such an account of the word 'God' as makes it possible to model it in both

---

[61] 1963: Review 1, Maclagan . . ., p. 297.

> personal and impersonal terms, a task which at least in principle is only like discovering (say) that discourse both about straight lines and ellipses can be harmonised within discourse about a cone.[62]

The account of the word 'God' which promises to harmonize the apparently conflicting use of personal and impersonal models is the culmination of Ramsey's entire theory of disclosure models. Ramsey models 'God', we may recall, on the logic of 'I' which likewise integrates or harmonizes conflicting models, and in each case our knowledge, while it must be articulated in many different ways, is integrated by these words—'God' and 'I' respectively—whose use is justified, and indeed required, by what is disclosed to us in a disclosure situation.

With this remark we have reached from yet another direction the central question of how disclosure and model, or disclosure situation and disclosure language, are connected. How are we to understand the claim that disclosure

[62] 1963: Review 1, Maclagan . . ., pp. 297-298. Cf. 1966:4, "A Personal God", p. 70: "When in this way we use both personal and non-personal concepts in discourse about God, we shall not of course think of God as the theological equivalent of 'wavicles'. We shall not think of our language—personal or impersonal—picturing God. The problem is NOT: puzzle how God can be both personal and not personal, as though we were asking: how can a vehicle be both a horse and a bus? It is a measure of the development since Webb's discussion, a measure perhaps of the novelty of the approach that I am illustrating in this essay, that I would not care to speak in the material mode of the 'personality of God'. Rather would I speak of the possibility of talking in terms of a personal model of that which confronts us actively in a cosmic disclosure, of that for which the word 'God', when used, is a word which demands and deserves a progressively more complex contextualization in a multi-model discourse."

language (a family of models) is justified and prescribed—'verified'—by the disclosure situation? Here again is the theme of 'evidence' and 'reliability', broached in the previous chapter in the discussion of the objectivity of a disclosure; we take it up now from the point of view of the language in which the disclosure is articulated.

1.5 Disclosure Models and Verification

The peculiar merit of the word 'disclosure', as used both in 'disclosure situation' and 'disclosure model', is, so Ramsey claims, to fuse subject and object in an active relation or interchange which promises to preserve the distinction between them without subordinating one to the other. He can argue, on the one hand, that

> . . . the very aptness of the word I use—disclosure—is that the objective reference is safeguarded, for the object declares itself objectively by actively confronting us.[63]

Yet there can be no disclosure if the subject is not also actively engaged in the situation, and brought to the point of recognition and response, or, in the terms already introduced in the previous chapter, of discernment and commitment. This mutual involvement of subject and object, and the close inter-dependence of disclosure situation and disclosure models (language), make a crucial difference to the way in which what we have been calling disclosure language

[63] 1964:1, Models and Mystery, p. 58.

is to be read and analyzed. It cannot be dissociated from its context—an obvious enough remark to make, were it not that some paradigms of analysis have not only attempted but insisted upon neutrality of context as a necessary condition for testing the 'meaningfulness' of an expression. The reference, of course, is to the proponents of the falsification thesis for whom the only way to understand a sentence, to satisfy themselves that they know precisely what it means and what it does not, is not to check its fidelity to the situation in which it arises, but to differentiate it as sharply as possible from another, perhaps fictitious, situation with which it is incompatible. The difference between this point of view and Ramsey's has already been noted and is of decisive importance; yet it is not so sharp as to result in a refusal to allow the question of possible falsifiability to arise. Instead Ramsey seeks to steer a middle course in which he admits the appropriateness of the question, but on his own terms. It is to a consideration of these that we now turn.

1.51 Verification and 'Empirical Fit'

Ramsey's whole discussion of the type of evidence that is operative in a disclosure situation, where personal involvement is a key factor, is an effective protest against the over-simplification which has identified verification with strictly experimental testing.

> But experimental verifications do not provide the only possible connections of discourse with empirical fact and in particular it will suffice for theology that its language is in some way relevant to empirical facts and provides some kind of interpretation about the Universe.[64]

Obviously enough, in the light of what he has had to say of its models, theological language is "in some way relevant to empirical facts" and does provide "some kind of interpretation about the Universe". We must now ask in what way is it relevant, what kind of interpretation does it offer; which brings us to the distinction of empirical verification and empirical 'fit'.

Models in both science and theology win acceptance, in the first place, because

> structurally . . . (they) somehow or other chime in with and echo the phenomena. In this way the universe itself authenticates a model. The model arises in a moment of insight when the universe discloses itself in the points where the phenomena and the model meet. In this sense, there must be at the heart of every model a 'disclosure'. Such a disclosure arises around and embraces both the phenomena and their associated model.[65]

Thus the first check on a model is the obvious though rather vague one of 'appropriateness', or harmony with the situation which is the object of inquiry. A theological example of this would be the appropriateness of, let us say,

> a particular model such as that of personal affection or slave release in relation to the 'facts' of the

---

[64] 1965:2, "Biology and Personality . . .", pp. 202-203.

[65] 1964:1, Models and Mystery, pp. 13-14.

> christian life—a model which is then used for the better understanding and commending of doctrines of Grace and Atonement.[66]

In itself, however, success in borrowing language, or the ability to exploit a suggestive parallel in this way, proves little; what must be shown is that the likeness is not contrived but actually 'disclosed' and therefore empirically justified. It is in this more specific kind of check on its models that theology has of necessity to differentiate itself quite sharply from science. The test of a model in science is its continued success in promoting a theory by authorizing deductions which are subsequently found not to clash with 'the facts':

> In any scientific understanding a model is the better the more prolific it is in generating deductions which are then open to experimental verification and falsification.[67]

Theological understanding, by contrast, does not and indeed cannot proceed according to this pattern of verifiable deduction or prediction; its models serve a quite different purpose, and are related to theological doctrine and theory in a quite different way, so that we must expect them to be tested differently.

> A model in theology does not stand or fall with, a theological model is not judged for its success or failure by reference to, the possibility of verifiable deductions. It is rather judged by its stability over the widest possible range of phenomena, by its ability

---

[66] 1964:1, Models and Mystery, p. 16.

[67] Ibid., p. 14.

> to incorporate the most diverse phenomena not inconsistently. . . . There are in theology, as opposed to science, no deductive derivations, emerging one by one, to confirm or falsify the theory which is on our lips. The theological model works more like the fitting of a boot or a shoe than like the 'yes' or 'no' of a roll call.[68]

A theological model, therefore, is tested in the way a shoe is tested, by its continued serviceability in a variety of contexts,

> by its ability to match a wide range of phenomena, by its overall success in meeting a variety of needs. Here is what I might call the method of empirical fit which is displayed by theological theorizing.[69]

It might now seem that verification has ceased to be a concern, and that the discussion has shifted to something rather different, viz., the versatility and adaptability of a model. That this is not the case may best be seen by considering an example.

It is essential to remember here that the situations we have in mind, and the models by which we seek to characterize them, are distinctively personal, and that personal involvement is a prime factor which can never be left out of account. For this reason Ramsey cast about for another way of testing language in which this personal dimension would be dominant, the standard scientific test of verified prediction being inappropriate. A simple example which, interestingly enough, recalls the instance of which Flew

[68] 1964:1, Models and Mystery, pp. 16-17.

[69] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

made so much in the falsification controversy, will show why the standard prediction test is inappropriate.

> From '_a_ loves _b_' nothing can be rigorously deduced which permits of appeal to experiment and consequent verification and falsification.[70]

It may be said that this can quite properly be tested as a prediction that _a_ will on some occasion be found working to promote _b_'s happiness, or as a prediction, in Flew's preferred way of putting it, that _a_ will _not_ be found opposing, diminishing or destroying _b_'s happiness, and that if he is so found this will suffice to settle the question: '_a_ no longer loves _b_'. So the philosopher satisfies himself that he now knows how he can determine when it is proper, and when not, to use the word 'love' of _a_'s relationship to _b_; yet his cherished empirical test is woefully inadequate. Thus, for instance, _a_ may indeed be found on occasion to be promoting _b_'s happiness but his motives may be quite selfish, hoping to engineer a favour in return, and the philosopher intent on his predictive test may be blind to the deception. Nor is the negative test, that it must admit of falsification, much more reliable, since it strikes a false note from the very start. To suppose it possible to decide in advance what kind of behaviour is incompatible with _a_'s loving _b_ is to take an observer's view of what 'loving' means, and a quite shallow one at that. Love is a deeply personal relationship which can only be misrepresented by the language and testing techniques of the observer. The very behaviour conditions which he might think incompatible with 'love' could take on the character of a true test of love, sounding its enduring qualities and possibly deepening the relationship. In other words, love is as much a process of transformation as it is a promise of consistent behaviour, so that in so far as it is possible to specify a way of deciding whether or not one is justified in saying 'a loves b' this must be retrospective, not predictive.

---

[70] 1964:1, _Models and Mystery_, p. 38.

> Love is not tested in this way (i.e. on a basis of verifiable deductions); we only check it by seeing how well it harmonizes many diverse patterns of behaviour, and its justification will only be found by looking back on these patterns of behaviour extending over many years. Here is a connection between interpretation and empirical fact that is not at all scientific, but which I have spoken of elsewhere by using the phrase 'empirical fit',[71]

The same point is made even more succinctly at the conclusion of the discussion we have been considering:

> 'a loves b' will only be verified in terms of what I called in the last lecture 'empirical fit' and the test will be how stable the assertion is as an overall characterization of a complex, multi-varied pattern of behaviour which it is impossible in a particular case to specify deductively beforehand.[72]

Returning now from this example to consider the kind of empirical check that is appropriate to personal language in general, and 'religious' language in particular, we can

[71] 1965:2, "Biology and Personality . . .", p. 203.

[72] 1964:1, Models and Mystery, p. 38.

see more clearly what he has in mind when he proposes empirical 'fit' as a kind of verification. The decision that a shoe or a cap fits is a decision that can be made, in the end, only by the person who wears it, although it is nonetheless 'empirical' on that account. We might prefer the word 'pragmatic' here, and indeed Ramsey himself suggests it as an appropriate way of characterizing the theologian's decision that a model does fit the disclosure situation from within which he is speaking, and which he is trying to clothe (if the image may be permitted) as best he may in the language available to him.

> The model of 'love' will certainly have to meet the challenge of evil and suffering in the Universe and in this way to grapple with the 'problem of evil'; but even more importantly there will have to be specific situations which can be legitimately 'interpreted by love' if the model of love has any initial justification at all. There must be a pattern of empirical circumstances which fit 'loving' discourse when used of God. Such a fit is pragmatic in the widest sense; but it is not given by experimental verification in a strict scientific sense. . . . The kind of empirical fit which provides a . . . set of criteria for preferences between models is much more like the kind of fit which detectives look for between certain new clues and a 'theory' of the crime with which they are provisionally working.[73]

[73] 1966:1, "Talking about God . . .", p. 90. Cf. 1967:1, "Models and Mystery", Discussion . . ., p. 267: "That discourse talking about what a cosmic disclosure discloses will be preferred to some other in so far as it can 'make better sense of', provide a better-fitting conceptual framework for, the events of the world around us. This is not to say that theism is a scientific hypothesis . . . whose empirical success and reliability is measured by the extent to which the deductions made from it are experimentally verified. Rather is the theologian like the archaeologist or anthro-

The analogy between the detective and the theologian is instructive to the limited extent that it reminds us that the understanding at which they aim is to be judged a success or failure, in each case, in terms of the way in which it fits the situation on which it focuses. Theological understanding in particular, so he argues, is incomplete (fails) if it does not connect, or if it jars, with the religious form of life which provides its focus.

When Ramsey speaks of 'empirical fit' between models and their disclosure origin, he has a twofold fit in mind: they fit if they are faithful to the discernment which it is their task to articulate, and if they preserve the mystery, the transcendence, and the summons to commitment which are at the heart of the disclosure. In the example which we considered it was suggested that the appropriate empirical test of a's love for b was fidelity displayed 'through thick and thin' over a period of years, indeed a whole lifetime. The test of religious language is like this, only more complex, since besides the factors of discernment and commitment which belong to any disclosure situation, there is the mystery and transcendence, and the response appropriate to these, which characterize a religious situation. We must now inquire into this other side

---

pologist or detective who sees how his theory 'fits' a particular set of remains—though they may 'fit' many other theories, and at certain points fit ill with the one being sponsored."

to disclosure models. Only when the connection between model and mystery, disclosure and worship, religious language and religious life, has been made, will we have a finished survey of what he intends by 'empirical fit'.

2. Models and Mystery

The relationship between the model and the disclosure situation has been developed thus far in terms of reliability. Different ways have been sought to determine the fidelity of the model-based language to the disclosure situation in which it originates. Prolonged concentration on this aspect of the relationship has enabled us to explore the logical workings of his theory of models and its empirical grounding, but the questions to which these considerations have given rise call for a change in perspective. The shift from talk of empirical verification to empirical fit betokens a fresh perspective, since appeal is made to precisely those features of a disclosure situation which distinguish what Ramsey wants to call an adequate empiricism. Thus the topic of the empirical grounding of a disclosure model has recalled the discussion of his theory of models to the personal, active, lived dimension of the disclosure situation, as this was outlined earlier. It remains for us then to complete our exposition of his theory by noticing how the salient characteristics of a disclosure situation recur in the theory of disclosure model. Taking 'discernment' and 'commitment' as convenient reminders of these characteristics, we may now ask what bearing they have on his discussion of models.

We will begin by reviewing what he has to say on the topic of Intelligibility and Mystery, and then pass by way of a brief consideration of Mystery and Worship, to the relationship he sees between Theology and life, between discernment and the commitment which it evokes.

2.1 Intelligibility and Mystery

'Mystery' and 'transcendence' are words which Ramsey scarcely bothers to distinguish;[74] indeed they are equivalent in his thinking as designations of what is disclosed, of what empirical understanding uncovers but cannot encompass. Mystery is not only to be thought of as a paradox which teases the mind and resists every effort to penetrate its secret. It is also, on Ramsey's view of it, a pervasive dimension of the real of which we become aware in a disclosure situation, a dimension which we cannot but acknowledge as inescapably given to us (as in the disclosure of our own subjectivity) yet which cannot be captured in direct, straightforward language.

---

[74] 1966:3, "Berkeley and the Possibility . . .", p. 25: ". . . though human predicates are needed for intelligibility, yet they are naively inadequate for devotion. They leave room neither for mystery nor transcendence, if these can be properly distinguished . . .".

We are initially made aware of the mysterious and the transcendent in the recognition that subjectivity is not reducible to objectivity, that first person language is logically primitive and that it is necessarily grounded in, yet equally necessarily transcends, third person language.

> Let us not forget that those who use a language match the language they use. For language is integrated with its speaker in a verbal and non-verbal context. I have argued for the wide significance over the whole field of human knowledge of insight and disclosures, to which models (of the reliable kind) and metaphors . . . bear witness. It is in using these words that we are most characteristically persons, rather than mere organisms or even social units. In this sense we realize our transcendence, and the universe which discloses itself to us is similarly, by descriptive standards, 'mysterious' and likewise transcendent. What is not verbally odd is void of disclosure power; but words can be found in using which the universe and ourselves come alive together in a cosmic disclosure.[75]

It is therefore in the language appropriate to a disclosure situation, and in the close interplay of understanding, insight and imagination which a disclosure situation calls forth, that mystery and transcendence find their proper medium. We will consider each of these in turn.

2.11 Disclosure, Models, Mystery

In a curious way models, and more generally metaphorical language, are the medium in which a disclosure finds initial expression and fuller development, the exploration carried forward by the suggested models leading us onward

[75] 1964:1, Models and Mystery, pp. 68-69.

into the mystery:

> metaphors, like models, are rooted in disclosures and born in insight . . .
> models (are) always fulfilled in mystery, and mystery articulated in models.[76]

Mystery then is the culmination toward which models are directed, in as much as they articulate the discernment of what cannot fully be captured in language. Yet the connection between disclosure, model, and mystery is both tight and tricky. The model is indeed the medium in which the disclosure first takes articulate shape, and it seems to be so to the extent of being a vehicle not only for its articulation but also for its generation. How can it be both? Our difficulty here is to understand how disclosure and model are related without being lured into the chicken and egg type of dilemma. The two do not admit of a temporal separation, and although the language serves to give expression to the disclosure it also helps give rise to it, by providing the different contexts whose fruitful interaction is a necessary condition of its occurrence. As Ramsey conceives of it, two contexts—A and B—are brought together in a way that is more than merely suggestive of similarity; there is a tangential meeting such that we are brought to say (under these conditions, or for these purposes) 'A is B'. In other words, the more familiar language of context B now infiltrates the language of context A, and in this way brings to light, or discloses, something which neither language A nor language B is of itself sufficient to encompass.

---

[76] 1964:1, Models and Mystery, pp. 50, 70.

> On the view I am putting forward a metaphor would always be a signpost to some disclosure, some insight and inspiration, from which it takes its rise. Metaphors would be born in, and thereafter intended to evoke, a disclosure associated with a tangential meeting of two diverse contexts, e.g. the connecting of old age and autumn, a religious leader with light . . . From this tangential meeting between contexts, and as currency for the disclosure which that meeting evokes, discourse is then developed metaphorically when the second language infiltrates into the first in the most selective and subtle way. What I am saying is that the metaphorical expression 'A is B' arises in a disclosure where languages A and B meet tangentially, touching at a point, or rather at two coincident points. Hence, the 'is' of a metaphor has to be understood as a claim that (i) A and B in contact have generated a disclosure revealing some object and (ii) what it is that has been disclosed demands discourse which infiltrates B into A. In this way we would explicate, for example, 'Electricity _is_ flowing in the wire'; 'Light _is_ a wave motion'; 'Jesus _is_ the Messiah'. In each case the copula 'is' points to a disclosure whose object brings with it the possibility and need of endless novelty in metaphorical talking. Indeed I suggest that it is the built-in possibility of endless novelty, in virtue of which metaphors point to the mystery and elusiveness of what has been disclosed.[77]

It is at this point, perhaps, that we want to ask again: but what _is_ the object that is disclosed? The question, in some subtle way, brings with it the suggestion that all this talk about disclosure is simply evasive if,

[77] 1964:1, _Models and Mystery_, p. 52. On the 'interaction view' of metaphor, cf. M. Black, _Models and Metaphors_ (1962), pp. 38-44.

5

in the end, there is not an x which is disclosed, and which can be identified, isolated or at least delineated in some independent and relatively straightforward fashion. Understood in this sense, the question is a refusal of Ramsey's entire analysis of experience in terms of a disclosure situation. Models and metaphorical language are indispensable precisely because, to recall an earlier image, a two-dimensional projection (descriptive language) of a three-dimensional figure (a concrete, lived-in disclosure situation) needs correction. Models and metaphor provide the needed corrective, bring depth into the otherwise flat projection, and bring to the disclosure-language a fullness, a life, a richness of suggestion which match the very features that characterize a disclosure situation, features which point up, and in a measure show forth, the mystery or transcendence (the fullness) which in the end constitute every disclosure situation.

> In fact what some would call a mere eccentricity of language I have called a tangential meeting, and my point is that such eccentricity is not to be despised for its irregularity but welcomed for its enrichment, welcomed for the mystery to which it points, mystery because its explication is an endless unravelling.[78]

Mystery, on this way of viewing the matter, far from blocking the path to further understanding, invites endless exploration, and its ally in this is the power of suggestive expression generated by metaphorical language in a disclosure situation.

---

[78] 1964:1, Models and Mystery, pp. 52-53.

> There is no prior bound to the development of metaphorical discourse; nor are there any intrinsic limits to the transaction and interchange between contexts which a metaphor makes possible. A metaphor holds together two contexts in such a way as to generate an unspecifiable number of articulation possibilities. . . . Generalizing, we may say that metaphorical expressions occur when two situations strike us in such a way as to reveal what includes them but is no mere combination of them both. Metaphors and models, both enabling us to be articulate about an insight, are thus the basic currency for mystery, and we can spend our lives elucidating ever more faithfully the mystery in which metaphors and models are born.[79]

2.12 Understanding, Insight, Imagination

Characteristically, in Ramsey's treatment of them intelligibility and mystery shed much of the passivity and abstractness that the words themselves suggest rather strongly, and they take on instead something of the life and concreteness that comes of their being restored, we might say, to the disclosure situation which is their home. There, mystery becomes the fullness which cannot be contained or encompassed, but can only 'break in on' one in a disclosure; and intelligibility is conceived of as the fruit of a close interplay between understanding, insight and imagination. In another way of putting it, intelligibility is not a property or characteristic of things, it is the goal of understanding in the achievement of which all our powers of imagination and insight are brought into play. It is this combination of imagination and insight, directed toward fuller understanding, which is effected by recourse to models. These serve to promote understanding, or literacy, while maintaining due emphasis on mystery and insight, that is to say, on those aspects of a disclosure situation of which we are actively made aware (as terminal points in the process of understanding), but which can find expression in language only by suffering refraction, being bent into metaphorical forms.

---

[79] 1964:1, Models and Mystery, p. 53.

> It is my thesis, then, that by virtue of the models they variously incorporate or the metaphors which they employ, or the distinctions native to their exercise, all disciplines combine insight and discursive reasoning, mystery as well as understanding. . . .
> . . . All disciplines combine understanding and mystery, which means that we will expect to find in every discipline words and phrases which witness to insight as well as models which ensure literacy.[80]

Thus far 'mystery' has been taken in a neutral, or not specifically theological, sense. Yet it is properly a theological notion, which Ramsey not only recognizes but insists upon:

> It is the role of the true theology to stir vision, and to remind us of the mysterious.[81]

It is worth noticing again the close association in his mind of insight and mystery, of "stirring vision" and "reminding us of the mysterious". What gives this a theological flavour is the attitude of worship which characterizes the vision stirred by theology, and which is called forth as the only fitting response to the disclosure of the mysterious on which theology rests. Some attempt must now be made to document his use of 'worship' and the connection he makes between this and mystery.

---

[80] 1964:1, Models and Mystery, pp. 56, 61.

[81] Ibid., p. 69.

2.2 Mystery and Worship

At this point Ramsey's terminology seems to become inescapably circular. In the previous section we traced the close interdependence on each other of disclosure, model and mystery, suggesting at the end that worship was related to these somewhat as a product, as a response elicited by them. Yet how are we to understand this? Clearly we may confine ourselves to the case of theological understanding, and ask how worship is related to the articulated disclosure of mystery through the medium of theological models: as a response, as a presupposition, or in some way as both? To which end of the process of theological understanding does it properly belong, to what Ramsey calls its disclosure-basis or to its fulfilment? It does not take long to discover that the question, insofar as it is a request for clarification, is in danger of misrepresenting Ramsey's position by requiring that sharp distinctions be drawn where he is at pains to blunt them. With this possibility in mind the following passage will repay close study:

> Qualifiers thus provide not only for the endless construction of metaphors; they are at the same time the

> words in theology that witness to its grounding in permanent mystery, that point to a cosmic disclosure as that alone which reveals the topic of any and every theological utterance.
>
> So in theology it is not only that a model permits of articulation. In theology the model must occur in a phrase which incorporates also a qualifier which in its simplest form will be a word or a suffix designed to make sure that here the main point of the model is seen to be its fulfilment in a disclosure. At every stage in theological reasoning the route from a model to a mystery must be indicated. All that is not to deny the possibility of progressive understanding—far from it. It is merely a matter of where the essential emphasis is to be placed, and in theology the emphasis must be unambiguously on the disclosure basis of its utterances.
>
> Other disciplines will be judged primarily on the quality of their articulation; theology will be judged primarily on its ability to point to mystery.[82]

There is much that needs clarifying here. What does it mean to speak of "grounding in mystery" and "pointing to a disclosure" on the one hand, and on the other hand to emphasize "the disclosure basis" and the need for theology "to point to mystery"? Are mystery and disclosure interchangeable to the point of being synonyms? In this passage he says that "the main point of a model is . . . its fulfilment in a disclosure", while a little later he writes that "models are always fulfilled in mystery".[83] The notion of 'the fulfilment' of a model may be troublesome, but it may suffice to substitute something like 'the goal', or more generally 'the success', of a model. The main puzzle here is to understand what is meant by "grounding in . . .(mys-

[82] 1964:1, Models and Mystery, p. 61.

[83] *Ibid*., p. 70.

tery, disclosure)" and "pointing to . . . (a disclosure, mystery)", to know what the difference is between the origin and the goal of a model when it seems to be a matter of indifference how we identify these. Disclosure and mystery, like Tweedledum and Tweedledee, are, it seems, scarcely distinguishable; must we say the same for the origin and the goal of a model? We need only recall our discussion of the relationship between the disclosure situation and the models developed within it to see how we must answer. We are puzzled, and inclined to think Ramsey confused, if we forget the correctives to a narrow empiricism which he would have us read into every reference to disclosure, and if we fail to remind ourselves that the disclosure situation is the living context in which our language both comes to be and fulfils its purpose. Once we have understood this, we may hesitate to draw too confident a distinction between the origin and the goal of a model, as if these could not be the same disclosure situation, viewed differently.

What, we must now ask, does this tell us about theological understanding, and about the connection between mystery and worship? He has reminded us that

> at every stage in theological reasoning the route from a model to a mystery must be indicated.[84]

He means by this that theology must begin and end in a disclosure situation, where the mystery which is its "starting point'[85] may be thought of, more accurately, as the focal point for theological understanding. On this view of it, theology is a constant attempt to bring our language into focus, as it were, so that the many different forms of expression of which we avail ourselves, in trying to articulate what we experience in a disclosure situation, may be seen to converge on a common point of reference—"one which is given in worship".[86]

---

[84] 1964:1, Models and Mystery, p. 61.

> The 'real meaning' of all theological phrases is to be found in God—we have understood no Bible story, understood no doctrine, professed no Creed, used no prayer book in worship unless we have thereby found and known God.[87]

Worship comes of recognizing, it would seem, the ultimate nature of the claim being made on us in a disclosure situation. It may be a dim and inarticulate recognition at first, but it becomes clearer and more articulate as the disclosure situation takes hold, as it were, and finds adequate expression in language.

We may conclude that, as Ramsey uses the term, 'worship' is not to be thought of simply as a religious attitude which either supports or (alternatively) is supported by theological understanding. The connection between mystery and worship is as tight and tricky, and to be understood in the same way, as the connection between disclosure and mystery. Originating in a dim recognition of the mystery encountered in the disclosure situation, worship keeps us present to that mystery and leads us further into it; in this way what began with a dim recognition passes to a clearer and more definite response, a fuller and more reflective commitment. To this suggestion of a connection between theological discernment and religious commitment we now turn.

---

[85] 1963:3, "Theological Literacy", p. 37: "I fear that in their excitement over the models, in their enthusiasm of theological talking, in all their theological prolixity, the Fathers forgot, and many others have forgotten, that the starting point of these models is a mystery".

[86] 1957:1, Religious Language, p. 215: ". . . But at the same time I would emphasize that in the end the one 'factual' reference it (logical empiricism) preserves is the one which alone matters, the one which is given in worship".

[87] 1963:1, On Being Sure in Religion, p. 23.

2.3 Theology and Religious Commitment

The clearer discernment which we have been calling theological is not an end in itself, rather is it intermediate between the disclosure in which it originates and the commitment to which it leads. In Trinitarian theology, for instance, the worth of what we are brought by reflection to see and to say is tested, not just by the canons of internal consistency, but also, and more importantly, by the style of life and of action to which it leads. In other words, the understanding at which theology aims, so he suggests, is ordered toward advancing our conscious participation in the disclosure situation to the point where we enter into it, and respond to it, more conscious of what we are doing and what we should be doing.

> How should we know when we have rightly understood the doctrine and when we have not? How shall we know when we have confessed a true faith? The answer is that we only know, we only understand, Trinitarian theology as we retrace our steps, as we return from that Mount of Vision to which Trinitarian discourse should have led us, and prove our Trinitarian theology in Trinitarian living. There is nothing very novel about this. We may recall that philosopher George Berkeley, in his Alciphron, rightly emphasized in the eighteenth century that (the) Doctrine of the Trinity was designed to keep us from making logical blunders and was discourse which directed us how to act. Trinitarian belief is knowledge of mystery, displayed and 'verified', like all knowledge of a mystery, in the action to which it leads. Echoing Wittgenstein we might coin a slogan which like all slogans can be misleading if taken for the whole truth; and we might say of the Doctrine of the Trinity: 'Don't look for meanings, learn the response', that is, 'Don't look for pictures, don't take the talk as descriptive, but let it lead you in the one direction to worship and in the other direction to Trinitarian behaviour.[88]

This passage could well prove a hornet's nest of questions. We can best disregard as unfortunate the rather loose reference to Wittgenstein. There are problems enough for us in trying to hold together such phrases as "rightly understanding the doctrine", "confessing a true faith", "proving our Trinitarian theology in Trinitarian living", "Trinitarian belief is knowledge of mystery, displayed and 'verified', like all knowledge of mystery, in the action to which it leads". The whole piece seems so untidy, with crucially different concepts seemingly collapsing into one another without warning: 'understanding' doctrine and

---

[88] 1963:3, "Theological Literacy", p. 39.

'confessing' faith, 'belief' spoken of as 'knowledge of mystery', the latter spoken of quite offhandedly as 'leading to action'. Is this carelessness of a kind that cannot be remedied? The answer to that question lies in the intelligibility and plausibility he can bring to the claim that a theological 'doctrine', such as that of the Trinity, "leads you in one direction to worship and in the other direction to Trinitarian behaviour". However, rather than become involved in the specifics of Trinitarian theology, to say nothing of the puzzlement that 'Trinitarian behaviour' might occasion, we will try simply to see how he hopes to connect theology, worship and action.

2.31 'Theology' and 'Religion'

Allowing that theological understanding is and must be closely related both to the religious attitude of worship and to a distinctive way of life, the nature of that relation is still far from clear. It is at this point that one wishes Ramsey had given more thought to some of the working details of the partnership between 'religion' and 'theology', in particular to the way in which we are meant to apply the distinction of discernment and commitment to it. Thus far we have taken him to suggest that discernment is theological (it being served by the use of models) and that commitment is religious, but this is too simple and inflexible a distinction. Disclosure and discernment, we have to remember, are concomitant, and since he equates 'disclosure situation' and 'religious situation' it is to be expected that even at this 'pre-theological' stage there will be discernment, 'religious' or 'pre-theological' discernment. But what does it mean to speak of religious discernment as 'pre-theological'? or as 'non-theological', or 'a-theological'? What is it that differentiates them as kinds of discernment?

In one important respect Ramsey not only recognizes but insists on a clear distinction between religion and theology, and it seems to be a distinction which bears on the discernment appropriate to each, although it is made in language which is also, and perhaps primarily, suggestive of commitment.

> We can be sure of God, yet tentative about our theology. Let us frankly acknowledge our theological uncertainties. . . . Let us acknowledge where at various points we are doctrinally 'unsure' . . . recognizing that it is not inconsistent to claim at the same time that we are sure of God—God given to us in a disclosure to which all our language can at best only lead, of which all our pictures are at best temporal projections.[89]

Here we have the suggestion that religious discernment and commitment come hand in hand in the disclosure situation, and that the discernment at which theology aims develops out of this and is corrigible with respect to it. Thus there is a (religious) disclosure-base of which we are 'sure', on which we develop a (theological) language which we must never mistake for more than an approximation. Yet there is a difficulty to be noticed. Our theology is said to be tentative, while its religious base is 'sure': but what is meant by 'sure' here? Is this not the language, as we have already suggested, of commitment—'tentative' and 'firm' commitment? Are we to say that the discernment on which this sure (firm) commitment rests is 'certain', 'incorrigible', 'infallible'? It seems we must say that 'certainty' is not the appropriate category here, neither for theology nor for religion. We have to do rather with a commitment which is stronger than a bare statement of the discernment warrants. Yet is not this the very nature of commitment, so that the most that can be urged in favour of a firm commitment is that it is 'reasonable'? Careful weighing of the evidence can take us no further than this; between discernment and commitment, between deliberation and decision, there is a gap. The decision is a jump, a leap, for the making of which evidence is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition.

---

[89] 1963:1, On Being Sure in Religion, p. 23.

2.311 Probability and Conviction

In matching a tentative theology with a firm commitment Ramsey draws support from Bishop Butler's dictum that "probability is the very guide of life".[90] By 'tentative' theology he does not mean 'hesitant' theology, any more than Butler intends with 'probability' to recommend an 'uncertain' guide of life.

---

[90] Joseph Butler, The Analogy of Religion (1736), Author's Introduction, p. xxv.

> Now, it is important for us not to misunderstand what Butler had in mind by these words. He did not just mean: let us realize how little we know for certain about anything: that doubt and uncertainty pervade knowledge through and through: and so let us be content with a theology which is likewise no more than 'probable'. Let us be content with believing that God probably exists, just as we might say that there probably exists a Dalai Lama. What Butler would say was something very different from, indeed something almost precisely the opposite of, such a half-hearted belief, whose profession makes little or no difference to our lives.[91]

Both Ramsey and Butler are reminding us that our discussion has to do with a way of life and not just a way of thinking, with the realm of individual existence and not simply of the mind and of knowledge, so that 'probability', 'certainty', 'reasonableness' have an importantly different role to play in religious, or for that matter, ethical discourse.

> It wasn't probability based on apathy or disingenuity which Butler had in mind. What he had in mind was the way in which we make moral decisions in situations of great consequence when we 'go beyond the evidence', when we act on evidence that is only 'probable'. . . . It is as reasonable to have a dominating conviction with a tentative theology as it is to do our duty—to respond to a moral obligation in critically complex and uncertain circumstances. What we have to do then is to be adventurous, and not to be afraid to be wrong, for we shall certainly never be absolutely right.[92]

The probability and reasonableness in question here attach to the chain of evidence and of argument that is directed toward a decision, toward determining a course of action or a way of life. Such is the context in which 'religious convictions' are tested: they are weighed in the scales not only of consistency in thought but also of constancy in action, the test of time being as much a test of adherence as of durability.

---

[91] 1957:1, Religious Language, p. 16.

[92] 1965:3, "Contemporary Philosophy . . .", p. 60.

> To recall Butler in this way suggests at least one test for the reasonableness of our Christian convictions which are grounded in a disclosure which arises around historical uncertainties, and so admittedly embody a historical risk. The test is this: if we have 'seen' with the eye of faith, it must presumably have some particular bearing on our behaviour, so that we may expect there to be some relevant feature of that behaviour to which we may significantly point. Our behaviour must in some way witness to the transcendent disclosure to which it is a response. . . . It is as and when we show distinctive behaviour—such as going the second mile—that we may hope both to commend our Christian convictions in which such behaviour is rooted, and to have criteria to justify our claim to a cosmic disclosure, even though it arises around never so problematical a pattern of historical facts.[93]

The discussion thus far, while emphasizing the link between thought and action which lies at the very heart of such concepts as 'conviction' and 'decision', has not helped clarify the distinction between theology and religion. How are we to relate theological conclusions to religious convictions, theological inquiry to a religous way of life? Yet on reflection we may recognize that we already know Ramsey's answer, although it is not without

[93] 1965:1, Christian Discourse, pp. 24-25.

its difficulties. Religious convictions arise as our response to a disclosure, and take fuller shape as much in fuller reflection as in 'responsive' behaviour:

> we must certainly see to it that Christian convictions, arising in disclosures, win a constant explication in behaviour and thought.[94]

Theology is thus one of the ways in which the religious convictions take root and grow, or (it may be better to say) in which they are more fully articulated and developed. Yet it will always be important to distinguish religious convictions and theological conclusions, and to remember that the latter belong to a quite different category, and command a much weaker assent.

> A man's religious loyalty can sustain many particular expressions of thought and behaviour. Even if a religious man never displays the tentative attitude of the scientist to his theories, it does not follow that there is no sense in which his theology is tentative, open to revision, elucidation and development. We must not suppose that because a religious man possesses a dominant loyalty which claims expression through the whole of his existence, that he has a completely adequate doctrinal system and behaviour pattern.[95]

The disclosure in which the religious conviction, the conviction of faith, is rooted suggests models, ways of further articulation and development, but it does no more. The theologian cannot be 'sure' that his theology is adequate, or that the expression he chooses to give to his (or to

[94] 1965:1, Christian Discourses, p. 26.

[95] Unpublished notes, Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion, p. 6.

some) religious conviction is the best possible, that a better will not be forthcoming:

> It is a built-in hazard of disclosures, as contrasted with the 'facts' provided by scientific reporting, that they give rise to no self-guaranteed assertions. So we have not to be afraid to admit on occasion that we have been wrong in sponsoring some particular way of talking or acting, which hitherto we had supposed expressed adequately the insight which matched the disclosure. Indeed the only thing of which we can be sure is that we shall never be absolutely right, for God is 'God and not man' (Hos. 11.9) with a mystery and transcendence that will never be transparently clear.
>
> So all our precepts and all our pictures and all our attempts to talk of what a disclosure discloses will be no more than approximations. No behaviour precepts, no theological conclusions follow incorrigibly from a moment of vision.[96]

We may say, by way of summary, that in characterizing theology as 'tentative', Ramsey is opposing a tendency to confuse theological thinking and religious faith. Such a tendency reveals itself in the expectation, or requirement, that the firmness of religious conviction (of faith) will be, must be, matched by an unwavering attachment to theological positions which have been developed on the basis of that faith. The same may be expressed conversely, by saying that religious faith cannot be stronger than the weakest link in the chain of theological elucidation. The distinction he thus makes between theology and faith (or, more vaguely, 'religion') is fundamental, but it does little more than posit a difference where we would prefer to explore a relationship. He does offer some hints in this connection, and we may briefly review these by way of conclusion.

---

[96] 1965:1, Christian Discourse, pp. 25-26.

2.312 Theology: Understanding and Worship

Ramsey has called attention to a distinction, which is often expressed as an antithesis,

> between intuitive conviction and systematic certainty, between insight and system, between the discernment of a mystery and our theological understanding of it.[97]

By "discernment of mystery" here, it seems we must take him to mean both discernment and commitment, both disclosure and response, indeed both 'mystery' and 'worship'; so much at least is suggested by his distinguishing, if not opposing, it to "theological understanding". Theology, on the view he takes of it, is at the service of the prior (religious) discernment of mystery which is born, as he puts it, in a disclosure and is accompanied by the response of 'worship'. We may recall, as an instance, that he took the "Doctrine of the Trinity" to be

> designed to keep us from making logical blunders and . . . directed us how to act . . . Let it lead you (he went on) in the one direction to worship and in the other direction to Trinitarian behaviour.[98]

This passage, as we have already had occasion to notice, is quite confused, and we may well wonder what we are to

[97] 1963:1, On Being Sure in Religion, pp. 48-49.

[98] 1963:3, "Theological Literacy", p. 39. Cf. supra, 2.3, p. 173.

make of the suggestion that we will be led "in one direction to worship and in the other direction to Trinitarian behaviour", when we have just been told that one function of Trinitarian theology is "to keep us from logical blunders" and the other, or at least another, is to "direct us how to act". Presumably logical consistency and worship are not to be confused. Regrettable though this carelessness is, his intention seems to be clear enough, and that is to suggest that "theological understanding" should be thought of in at least two ways. In one sense it is a 'second order activity', intent on safe-guarding, while assisting the development and fuller articulation of, the 'religious language' to which a disclosure gives rise; this is the sense in which theology can be regarded as conceptual and systematic. In another important and complementary sense, however, theology concerns itself with life and living, with the disclosure situation which is its home, and in this connection it does indeed lead us back to worship and forward to a distinctive, appropriately responsive behaviour. In both senses theology is tentative, exploratory, open to revision, while its anchorage and goal (the disclosure situation and the mystery discerned and responded to in worship) are firm. His view is more satisfactorily expressed in the following:

> Theology will never be kept within the tight confines of a deductive system but in one way and another it will always display a variety of reliable discourse,

> varied too in its degrees of reliability. As we learn to be articulate in theology, we must at every point be sensitive and critical about our assertions—sensitive to discern how they arise out of, and must consequently be referred for their elucidation to, Christian disclosures; critically aware of their logical peculiarities and partial character. What we have to learn is the thrill of theological discovery, a rhythm of faith and love with understanding. It is this we must substitute for a be-all and end-all theology, for theological certainties and infallibilities. We must learn to be sure, to give ex animo assent when we can do no other, while all the time being theologically tentative. Commitment is only a synonym for credulity, prejudice and bigotry . . . if we suppose ourselves to have found a complete and final map of that which called forth our commitment.[99]

Theological understanding serves our need to articulate, to possess in some satisfactory fashion, the mystery disclosed to us in faith; but it is precisely 'theological' understanding in virtue of its fidelity to the religious ('worshipful') character of the disclosure situation which is its home. It is fidelity, in this sense, rather than incorrigibility or infallibility, which should be its goal; its success is to be measured by its 'truthfulness', fidelity and sensitiveness, both to the immediate context in which it is being developed, and to the larger, or generic, context of religion, of the disclosure of God and the response in worship.

> My point then is that we are to be tentative but always contextually tentative, about our theology, while grounding that theology in a disclosure of God. In this way we are to be sure in religion while being tentative, but contextually tentative in theology. This means that at each stage, the tentative is controlled

---

[99] 1963:1, On Being Sure in Religion, pp. 88-89.

> by the context to date, so that we always assert something firmly and squarely in a context. But such assertions are always ripe for development. This development must link any new assertion ever more coherently with the Creeds and Scriptures, and lead us to a greater comprehensiveness in so far as that new assertion will presumably match up better to a variety of contemporary challenges. So to be justly tentative in theology is to build continuously on an ever-changing context of pro tem. certainty and to have the humility which, while it strives energetically to build from such a base the best theological map it can, recognizes that it will never succeed in 'embodying' the Mystery.[100]

This passage may be left to summarize his view as well as any. It also provides a convenient vantage point from which to plot the course of our critical review. In the first place, his analysis of theological understanding, if that is not too ambitious a phrase, in terms of models and qualifiers, is neatly resumed in the reminder that theology will always be "contextually tentative". In the second place, the emphasis consistently given to 'disclosure', and to its role in keeping us open to 'transcendence' and 'mystery', is recalled for us in his insistence that theology will "never succeed in 'embodying' the Mystery". In this chapter we have explored the substance of his thought on each of these scores, trying to suggest how he sees them held together in the concept of a disclosure model. In the remaining chapter we must try to determine how successful, or how helpful, this concept is. Speaking roughly, we are left with the task of determining how well

[100] 1963:1, On Being Sure in Religion, p. 90.

'model' and 'disclosure' go together, specifically in the context of a proposed analysis of theological and religious language. What does it mean to say that the "disclosure of God" can be sure, while theology (its models grounded in that disclosure) will always be tentative? What is the distinction that is being drawn here between models and disclosure, between theological understanding (to be more specific) and religious conviction? How consciously and consistently does Ramsey make this distinction, and how legitimate is it?

Chapter IV: Critique

page

1. The Concept of Disclosure Situation. 188

1.01 Recapitulation 188
1.1 Total Revision of Empiricism, or Partial Amendment? 190
1.2 'Disclosure Situation' as Criterion and as Occurrence 193
1.21 Possible Solutions 195
1.3 'Disclosure Situation' in Theology 198
1.31 Disclosure Situation as Religious, Historical and Personal 199
1.32 Recovering Disclosure Situations 200
1.4 Metaphysics of Disclosure and Language Hierarchies. 201

2. The Concept of Disclosure Model. 204

2.1 Disclosure and Explanation 206
2.2 Model and Theory in Theology 208
2.21 Methodological Comparisons 210
2.22 Methodological Problems Peculiar to Theology . 213

3. Models: Religious and/or Theological? 215

3.1 Unsounded Ambiguities of 'Religious' and 'Theological'. 216
3.2 Models in a Religious Context. 218
3.21 Theology's Task. 220
3.22 Scientific and Religious Sources for Theological Models 222
3.3 Theological Understanding and Faith. 225
3.31 Difficulties 226
3.32 Source of Difficulties 231

4. Conclusion 232

CHAPTER IV

CRITIQUE

An attempt will be made in this chapter to isolate the principal weaknesses in Ramsey's writings, and to press home basic questions which remain unanswered—in some cases, one would suspect, unasked.

The concept of disclosure situation will be reviewed first, attention being given to certain persistent difficulties arising from his exposition and implementation of this concept. Next it will be the turn of the complementary concept of disclosure model, our particular interest here being to determine how strictly he is using the concept of a model, and how close he intends the parallel to be between scientific and theological models. Finally, and most basic of all, is the question of what has happened to the notion of model when it is used without discrimination between such diverse contexts as the religious and scientific, or academic, contexts clearly are. Here we have the problem, again, of the relation of theology to religion and the language of faith, on the one hand, and, on the other, to science, to scientific inquiry and understanding, with which it is being compared on the methodological theme of models.

1. The Concept of Disclosure Situation

One of the busiest and yet most elusive and troublesome concepts in this exposition of Ramsey's thought has been the concept of disclosure, or of disclosure situation. We will recapitulate briefly before attempting to isolate its weaknesses.

1.01 Recapitulation

The recurrence of the word 'situation' in Ramsey's references to 'disclosures' is to be noted, since it recalls the complexity of actual experience with the subject at its centre and actively engaged in it. His continued preference for 'disclosure' over 'experience' is meant to call attention to the way in which he conceives of our thinking being shaped empirically: empirical thinking is less a matter of amassing and collating data, than of pursuing hints and discerning patterns in the data under survey. A disclosure situation is such a situation, where the weighing of evidence, of factors pro and con, is carried to the point of recognition or decision, where the data considered do not simply 'add up' to this, they 'fall into place'; the thinker is led to the recognition of that toward which the data had accumulated hints, and which they are now said to disclose.

One of the commonest objections to Ramsey's concept of disclosure—that it is psychological, subjective, personal (private)—stems from a failure to appreciate the complexity of any appeal to experience. When we remember the philosophical context in which the concept of disclosure situation is offered by Ramsey, we recognize the need for caution in pressing any objection which calls attention to 'subjective' or 'psychological' overtones to this concept. He insists on it as a corrective to precisely such a tendency to draw too easy and too emphatic a distinction between 'subjective' and 'objective', between the public empirical world of 'objects' and the unobservable private world of 'the subject'. He resists this dichotomy and prefers to think of the subject 'situated' in the so-called public world in which it is engaged, construing 'subject' as 'agent' rather than as a grammatical place-holder or, in the manner of Humean analysis, as a logical construct. It is indeed interesting to see him hasten to the defence of others suspected of psychologism:

> the appeal to disclosures is absolutely necessary in Polanyi's case in order to make it abundantly clear that Polanyi is making more than merely a psychological point. . . . I think it would do an injustice to the importance and far-reaching character of Polanyi's insights to think of his theory as being 'purely psychological', and I suggest that an appeal to disclosures is necessary to scotch that particular misunderstanding, as well as, at the same time, to establish the objective reference. . .[1]

In this altered perspective care must be taken not to urge difficulties based on a sense of 'subjective' which is precisely the one at issue. Yet fundamental questions can be framed which express an uneasiness that persists even after due allowance has been made for the revisions he proposes.

---

[1] 1968:1, "Polanyi and J. L. Austin", p. 179.

1.1 Total Revision of Empiricism, or Partial Amendment?

'Disclosure situation' is the key concept offered by Ramsey in what he proposes as a 'more adequate empiricism', but it is not clear in what sense, or more exactly to what extent, he intends it as a revision of the vague, but familiar and well worn, concept of experience. Is it to be taken as a generally proposed improvement to this concept, so that it will be heir to the same vagueness and ambiguity, only with the difference that it will give prominence to the neglected dimension of personal and active engagement in experience? Or is it to be considered rather as an amendment, one which is to be borne in mind indeed but is of definitive importance only as a special case, as for instance in 'decision situations', where personal involvement is clearly a factor to be given prominence?

What Ramsey consistently has in mind when he speaks of disclosure situation is the priority to be given to first person language, as the ultimate context for all uses of language. He attaches the greatest importance to the manner of self-disclosure as the paradigm of a disclosure situation, and proposes a transposition of this onto the objective plane, suggesting that 'God' be modelled on 'I', that the concept of God and the language proper to it are the objective counterpart to 'I' and first person language, and are to be traced back to the same process of disclosure. Although he has reverted to this theme often enough, and has done something toward its elaboration, it remains too sketchy and too fleeting a hint to be firm ground on which to march with the assurance Ramsey invites us to share with him. In particular we may hesitate to follow him in the assumption, for such it remains, that first person language is equally important and equally relevant in any given situation, in mathematical or physical research as much as in the making of a personal decision.

In spite of what Ramsey has to say about a 'more adequate empiricism'—and we can accept some of his recommendations on this point—he cannot be said to have done more than urge the candidacy of 'disclosure situation' as a more adequate way of characterizing any actual situation to which appeal is made. It remains doubtful whether this concept is as important and as relevant in empirical investigations undertaken in the sciences, as it clearly is in the matter of ethical and theological reasoning. We may allow that Ramsey can construe the one context as well as the other in terms of a 'disclosure situation', but the weight put on it in each case is vastly different. In the case of the sciences, it provides an important reminder of certain factors which are too easily neglected or dismissed as irrelevant because 'subjective'; beyond this it is not clear that the personal involvement of the scientist in his inquiry is relevant, in any immediate way, to the actual conduct or outcome of his inquiry. As a reminder, it does indeed play a significant role in curbing positivistic tendencies to make too much of 'purely objective' criteria, and to depreciate the importance of aesthetic and other 'subjective' factors which have their part to play in the development of theories, and in the theoretical preferences shown in the selection of models. Yet this scarcely seems sufficient ground for proposing 'disclosure situation' as equally applicable in scientific, ethical and theological inquiries.

One cannot help suspecting that Ramsey has been too hasty in assuming that his important adjustment to the classical concept of experience was of equal and univocal importance everywhere, and that in his haste he has extended it beyond its legitimate range, which would be properly personal 'decision situations', characteristic of ethical and theological thinking. In short, a disclosure situation seems oriented more to the process of deliberation, decision and choice than it is to the scientific probing of hypotheses, and the quest for explanation, theory and the like.

1.2 'Disclosure Situation' as Criterion and as Occurrence

Ramsey's references to 'disclosure situation' are, on the whole, too frequent and too casually made. Despite the major role it plays in this thinking, perhaps because of it, it remains for the most part uncertain in what sense precisely an appeal to a disclosure situation is to be taken. In some cases he will be directing our attention to the concept, attempting to explicate it and argue its merits as a criterion; in other cases he will be trying to identify an instance for us, offering different examples of disclosure situations or 'evoking' one for us with the help of an example. Is there a concealed shift in meaning involved in the passage from talk of 'disclosure situation' as a concept or criterion to its instantiation in a specific case? The suspicion that there is may be expressed in questions such as the following: How do we identify a disclosure situation, and from what standpoint, if its essential characteristic is a full realization on our part ('disclosure') of our participation in it? If full participation is what essentially constitutes an actual disclosure situation, how can we distinguish different disclosure situations, from what (detached) point of view can we take more than one into view at a time, compare them and even adjudicate between them? Is detachment of any kind compatible with the conative emphasis in his concept of disclosure situation, and if it is not, what does it mean to speak of 'disclosure situations' in general, to take them into view as a class? Is it possible, and again from what standpoint, to raise, and settle, the question of one purported disclosure situation being accepted as genuine and another rejected as spurious? In other words, what kind of criteria will serve to authenticate one disclosure situation in preference to another, and the claims or decisions supported by one disclosure situation as opposed to those sponsored by another? When he proposes, as a general principle, that all religious language is grounded in a disclosure situation, are we to understand by this that the diverse religious traditions in the world are grounded in different kinds of disclosure situations? Presumably not, since at the generic level it makes no sense to speak of more than one 'kind' of disclosure situation; yet if this form of the question is unsatisfactory the suspicion persists that in offering this principle or criterion he invites difficulties of a kind that, inevitably, obscure the concept of disclosure situation. The question he invites is this: how is it possible, from one (or from no particular) religious standpoint, to uphold the claims of one religious tradition against others, if the empirical grounds of each religious tradition are inextricably bound up with its acceptance, in a disclosure situation? It is a question which in turn invites confusion since discussion of it is most likely to proceed at a level of generality where, so we suspect, the complication of actual involvement in diverse situations is less acutely felt.

1.21 Possible Solutions

One way out of the difficulties we have been noticing might be to admit the ambiguity of 'disclosure situation', and to argue nonetheless that it can serve a useful purpose, if used with care. His claim that religious language is authenticated by an appeal to a disclosure situation is made at a level of generality from which there is no escape; hence we take 'disclosure situation' to be a norm, arrived at by careful reflection on what is involved in an appeal to experience, offering guidelines to be followed in the case of every such appeal. Understood in this way, it makes sense to conceive of a process whereby different purported disclosure situations would be reviewed, and we would be alerted to the danger of confusing 'disclosure situation', used as such a norm, with 'disclosure situation' used as referring to an actual instance conforming to the norm. If the ambiguity can be averted in this way, it will be at the cost of a considerable weakening of Ramsey's claims, and the concept of a disclosure situation will take on both a more precise and a more modest role than may suit his purposes.

It is to be expected, however, that Ramsey would refuse the charge of ambiguity and argue that the attempt to distinguish between disclosure situation as a norm and as an actual situation is misconceived. He would remind us that in any inquiry we are taken up into a context which shapes our thought and which, it is hoped, will bring us to recognize and accept the pattern it holds; in which case, disclosure situation is best thought of as an actual occurrence, a moment of insight in which attention is given as much to the empirical data as to the experience of insight, of their falling into place and being seen in a way they had not before. In a disclosure situation all our previous efforts to find a way are brought to fruition: we are 'satisfied' in Bradley's phrase.[2] Can such satisfaction, can a disclosure situation, be shared? Only in the sense that we can try to lead others to the point of disclosure, where the pattern we have come to see will strike them as well. There is no guarantee of success, it is not a mechanical process but the product of effort, alertness and readiness to pursue the clues. What we have to remember, therefore, is that Ramsey fixes attention on the activity of understanding—of doing science, of doing theology, of using language. His criteriology belongs in a live context of activity and use, so that it cannot be satisfactorily sketched out or criticized in abstraction from such a context.

---

[2] Cf. 1961:2, "On the Possibility . . .", pp. 163-164: "Again, 'Absolute' is sometimes offered as an integrator word belonging to a unified over-all scheme, and is then given by reference to what F. H. Bradley called 'immediate experience', something which breaks in on us when we 'see' the unsatisfactoriness of stories about terms and relations". Bradley's use of the term 'satisfy' may be illustrated by the following passage: "Our actual object fails to satisfy us, and we get the idea that it is incomplete and that a complete object would satisfy. We attempt to complete our object by relational addition from without and by relational distinction from within. And the result in each case is failure and a sense of defect. We feel that any result gained thus, no matter how all-inclusive so far, would yet be less than what we actually experience. Then we try the idea of a positive non-distinguished non-relational whole, which contains more than the object and in the end contains all that we experience." F. H. Bradley, Essays on Truth and Reality (1914), p. 188.

How then would he have us interpret his general statement that all religious language is grounded in a disclosure situation? Is this to be understood as a systematic requirement, suggesting that we move freely from one religious tradition to another with a view to validating each, or at least understanding each, by trying to discern its distinctive disclosure situation? In view of what we have come to understand about a disclosure situation, it seems likely that he would want us to take this general statement differently—we cannot move freely from one disclosure situation to another. If religious language is grounded in a disclosure situation we will know this only by being brought to share it, and if our questioning is brought to a halt in this way we will be 'satisfied'; there will be no cause to move toward another purported disclosure situation, to test if it is genuine. In short, disclosure situations are not to be thought of as imaginable contexts which can be conjured up at will, as we might try to recover a context in which a puzzling or paradoxical use of language would make sense. Ramsey's statement leaves itself open to unsympathetic reading, but if we take into account all that lies behind it he seems to be saying no more than that religious language being the language of personal discernment and commitment, there is no way of engaging with it which would remain impersonal and detached. He is not proposing a method whereby different and conflicting religious claims can be sorted out; he is reminding us (though we may think somewhat awkwardly) that there is only one way to settle questions of this sort, and that in the end, after all the arguments have been presented, each is left to himself.

1.3 'Disclosure Situation' in Theology

Despite the ambiguities noticed in the previous two sections it has been allowed that, in calling attention to those features of experience which the concept of disclosure situation brings to the fore, Ramsey is on the right track. We voiced some doubts as to the extent of its relevance, but there can be no doubt that if it is to be a key concept anywhere it would be in theology: does he not refer to it, alternatively, as a 'religious situation'? Yet even in theology its role is not as clear and unambiguous as we have a right surely to expect it to be.

1.31 Disclosure Situation as Religious, Historical and Personal

We have already noted the need for caution in speaking of disclosure situation as 'the empirical ground' of theological sentences. In addition to the difficulties found, in general, to be involved in such an appeal, there is the quite specific problem of determining how, in any actual instance, theological thinking is 'empirically grounded' in a disclosure situation. 'Theological thinking' is in itself a vague enough phrase covering a wide range of possibilities, but we will confine our attention to the difficulties attending its empirical side. It seems to be in the nature of the case that the kind of discussion in which theologians engage, the kind of data, situation and context by which they are guided, are both historical and religious, both past and at the same time presently relevant, of another time and yet also calling for personal involvement and commitment. Thus the Christian Scriptures are to be taken both as historical and as religious documents, and although the sense in which this is to be understood is the centre of much controversy it will suffice to note the bearing it has on our present difficulty.

An appeal to Scripture is, on Ramsey's understanding of it, an appeal to a disclosure situation which is both historical and religious, building on historical evidence of a kind that elicits a response of personal commitment to what the evidence points toward or, as he would say, discloses. Yet the use of 'disclosure situation' to cover both historical inquiry and religious response can be a dangerous deception, or at best confusion. Historical discernment and religious commitment are two qualitatively different activities, and they cannot be accomodated, and be accepted as terminal poles of one activity, simply by having the accomodating vocabulary of disclosure theory to appeal to. Such confusion is inevitable while reliance continues to be placed on a concept which, while it does point in the right direction, papers over too many complications in its haste to attain the goal it glimpses.

1.32 Recovering Disclosure Situations

Another cause for dissatisfaction is the way in which the role of 'disclosure situation' can elude us in even the most familiar exercises of theological thinking, where we experience little difficulty in understanding what the theologian is about. In trying to understand their language and the conceptual framework in which they operate, it is necessary that they have a good appreciation of its historical development, and in particular of the controversies in which it was shaped, and in which alternative formulations, or models, were rejected. This exercise in historical theology Ramsey chooses to characterize as a process of tracing models back to the disclosure situation in which they originated: we have to recover, it seems, not only 'a feel for' the way in which older formulations were arrived at, but also—in a sense not explained—the disclosure situation in which each formulation originated. What does it mean to recover a disclosure situation in this way? Is it a past disclosure situation which by historical research is somehow revived and evoked for us once again? Is it a new disclosure situation, similar to the old, in which we come to see again the point of the formulations we are studying? Ramsey may well counter, again, with the argument that these questions are based on a misconception of what is meant by 'disclosure situation', but it is surely a weakness of this concept that it is so liable to being misunderstood. What, we may ask, is he saying in the end that cannot be said without invoking 'disclosure situation' and the puzzlement that attends its use?

1.4 Metaphysics of Disclosure and Language Hierarchies

Ramsey's metaphysics is nothing if not ambitious, which is perhaps its besetting weakness: too much attempted, too little completed. The fundamental claim that first person language, and religious language, must be 'logically odd' to match the disclosure situation, rests on a foundation that has been sketched out for us, but never yet thoroughly explored or tested. Ramsey himself is not unaware of this, and in his first major work he offered to allay philosophical doubts by a more careful account of his starting point:

> To some, a game may itself provide all the reason we need have for accepting its rules; others, less easily satisfied, may ask for an independent and altogether more philosophical discussion of my starting point. These die-hards will, I hope, look sometime in another book which I hope soon to publish under the title of Fact, Metaphysics and God.[3]

A decade has passed, and the die-hards are still waiting. Ramsey has continued to ring the changes on a theme which has yet to be presented and examined in its own right. He can point to his more recent writings, but in none of these can he claim to have fulfilled his promise:

> Not that I suppose that even now the matter is satisfactorily worked out . . . In any case, Fact, Metaphysics and God (if not a Summa) is still, I am happy to say, on the way.[4]

We may wait then, hopefully or sceptically, for his own account of the matter; and what he must do, among other things, is to persuade us to accept, not just the metaphor of levels in language and in fact, but its soundness as a foundation for his entire philosophy. Meanwhile two specific doubts may be raised which indicate the uneasiness that cannot but be felt about the state of the foundations on which he is so busily building.

[3] 1957:1, Religious Language, p. 9.

[4] 1965:4, "The Intellectual Crisis . . .", p. 110.

In the first place, we should suspect the ease with which he introduces the religious concept of worship into a highly contrived metaphysical theory, arguing that a unique logical status belongs to 'God' as 'the apex word' of our language, and that its 'factual' reference is given in worship.[5] What he seems to have done here is to have borrowed a concept which is central in religious usage and practice, and proceeded to put it to quite different work without once yielding to the suspicion that the difference might be sufficiently marked to preclude the easy traffic between religious and metaphysical categories in which he delights.

---

[5] Cf. 1952:2, "The Challenge . . .", p. 269: "It is, indeed, *in worship* that we use, and justifiably, the index word 'God'—the apex word which brings 'unity' to our metaphysical system. For 'worship' is the ordinary word for describing the 'self-other awareness' we have mentioned so frequently". See also, 1957:1, *Religious Language*, p. 215; and 1952:1, "Miracles . . .", pp. 29-30 (cited in part infra, 3.22, p. 223). Ramsey seems to owe this interpretation of 'worship' to F. D. Maurice, whom he quotes as saying, "Worship then I conceive becomes the link between Physical and Moral Studies", and goes on to gloss this in the following fashion: "I have suggested that, faced with contemporary social problems, both theological and sociological considerations must be so developed as to reveal their various presuppositions, and the expectation, at least of the Christian, is that this common task and inquiry will lead towards a common worship wherein these presuppositions are jointly anchored, and wherein the research group comes to know the fellowship of the Holy Spirit guiding men into all the truth. *Logically* this implies that theological language and sociological language can be shown each to have presuppositions which themselves can be linked by assertions containing the integrator word 'God'". 1963:1, *On Being Sure in Religion*, pp. 44-45.

The second difficulty centres on the compatibility of the empirical and the linguistic stresses in his proposed theological method. He has insisted on the importance to theology of its 'empirical anchorage' in a disclosure situation, and he has also recommended formal mode analysis as an essential feature of theological method. Are the two compatible? In what sense can contextual analysis be 'formal'? Can it be in any sense formal, if it must always return us to the disclosure situation? If formal analysis can be done in theology, and Ramsey recommends that it *be* done, at what point does the disclosure situation become relevant? In other words, there seems to be a dilemma: either the analysis is formal, disclosure does not enter as a relevant factor, and hence the analysis is not theological; or it is theological, disclosure is a factor, and so it cannot be formal. Is this truly a dilemma, or can 'formal' be given an acceptable meaning which would serve Ramsey's purpose? Has he proposed a sense of 'formal' which would help here? Or has he borrowed the term and the concept of 'formal mode' analysis to meet a need, without giving thought to the complications that arise in its use? Questions of this kind seem not to have detained Ramsey, and yet they are surely both pertinent and fundamental.

2. The Concept of Disclosure Model

In the conjunction of 'disclosure' with 'model' Ramsey intends to fix attention on the kind of understanding, and the kind of context, from which models proceed. Essentially what he points to is the emergence of models—"self-selected, significant features of a disclosure"[6]—in an inquiry whose aim is to catch and be faithful to the hints and clues which the context suggests to him. There would seem to be two stages in his thinking about 'disclosure model': there is the matter of his general thesis that every model comes from, and can only be understood in, a disclosure; and there is the more specific, theological claim that in every disclosure we are confronted by, and brought to acknowledge, a mystery which it is theology's task to articulate and keep to the fore.

It can be offered as a general criticism of his work that he is given to advancing claims that are insufficiently worked out; often we are asked to grant the claim, for example that there are cosmic disclosures, "for the sake of argument"[7], and it is doubtful if we get beyond the stage of agreeing that, as he uses it, such a concept is indeed suggestive and fruitful. We will confine our attention here to difficulties more immediately related to the connection between disclosure and model.

---

[6] 1967:1, "Models and Mystery", Discussion . . ., p. 264.

[7] Cf. Ibid., p. 265.

2.1 Disclosure and Explanation

The connection he makes between 'disclosure' and 'model' is not in itself troublesome, when we understand him to be alerting us to the epistemological significance of models, if we may call it that. What he has to say about disclosure is meant to show us what kind of activity understanding is, as we see it unfold in the recognition, acceptance and development of models, as it works in partnership with the imagination and in conscious contact with the context of its operation. It becomes troublesome when we try to relate this approach to models with the treatment and the kind of questions usually associated with the topic among philosophers of science. Although they disagree among themselves on the importance attaching to models, and the measure of their contribution to understanding, they all agree in focussing their discussion on the explanatory role of models. Explanation is a term of generous scope which it is difficult to define, and indeed taken at its most general it seems scarcely distinguishable from understanding: each is the goal of all research, of every inquiry, of theorizing and of teaching. Yet as it engages the interest of most philosophers, particularly in the philosophy of science, explanation is restricted to the interpretation —by means of a theory and with the help of a model—of certain phenomena, certain data, a given domain. Has Ramsey shifted his discussion of models away from this kind of question, so that what he says is at best a fresh slant on models, complementary to but remote from the specific interest which philosophers of science have shown in the topic? In other words, how does his concept of disclosure fit into their various treatments of theoretical explanation? How is his discussion of model and theirs related?[8]

Although his attention is given principally to the way in which models bespeak a disclosure situation, Ramsey's treatment does bear on the more explicit discussion of the nature of explanation. The recognition, he would say, of a good or successful explanation is achieved in a disclosure situation, in which it is seen to 'fit' the phenomena without closing itself off from the possibility of future adjustments. An explanatory model which is fruitful in suggestive power is so, in Ramsey's view, in virtue of the germinal insight, or disclosure, from which it proceeds and on which it continues to draw confidently. But the reiteration of this claim does not guarantee its acceptance, and Ramsey has tended to concentrate on producing evidence, or

[8] It is not possible, in the following pages, to do more than indicate in a general way some of the problems that make up the larger context to which, in the end, Ramsey's own discussion belongs, if we are to take seriously his comparison of scientific and theological models. A considerable literature has been developing in the philosophy of science on the problem of theoretical explanation, and of the status of theories and models (the two are not always easily distinguished). Some of these writings are listed in the bibliography, those by Achinstein, Black, Hesse and Nagel being perhaps the best introduction.

examples, in support of his general thesis, hurrying past too many complications and difficulties. One question in particular, which has been raised by more than one critic, still awaits a satisfactory answer: what of bad theories, mistaken explanations, rejected models? Are we to say that these proceeded from misplaced confidence in a putative, or mistaken, disclosure? And how are we to distinguish a genuine from a pseudo-disclosure? There is no guarantee, he reminds us often, that a disclosure will occur, but can we not expect some guarantee that a disclosure has occured? It seems Ramsey has no recourse but to say that disclosures are, in the nature of the case, self-authenticating, and then to go on to argue that, short of oversimplification, there is no other way of faithfully recounting all that is involved in the complex and concrete operation of understanding. He may be right, but he owes a much stricter discussion of a concrete case than he has given us thus far.

2.2 Model and Theory in Theology

It is useful and rewarding to approach the study of theology, as Ramsey has done, through the study of its models, and to attempt a comparison of this with similar studies of the models used in different scientific inquiries. But it should be done more thoroughly, less hurriedly and on a smaller scale, than Ramsey has attempted. More explicit attention should be given to the relevance of questions which play a prominent role in such investigations in the philosophy of science. For instance what counterparts, if any, are there in theology to such key concepts in science as theory, hypothesis, law, experiment, description? Is there any correlation between these and doctrinal schemes, theological theses, dogmatic formulae, conciliar creeds? If questions of this kind are found to be off the track, alien to theological inquiry, then we must ask what is the point of comparison between theological models and scientific models. In Ramsey's case the real focus of interest would seem to be on the basic or initiating activity of the understanding, whether in discovery or in explanation, and on its imaginative or suggestive power as this is evidenced in the selection and development of models. This fact is perhaps sufficient to account for the broad sweep of his analysis and for his neglect of the kind of question hinted at above, and usually so prominent in any discussion of models in the philosophy of science.

In their discussion of Models and Mystery, both Braithwaite and Bastin challenged Ramsey's use of 'model', and faulted him for neglecting the considerable literature that exists on the subject. This criticism has to be upheld, even if modified somewhat by the admission that his discussion draws on a branch of that literature with which these critics happen to be in disagreement. The treatment of such as Max Black and Mary Hesse supports the view Ramsey takes of models, but that does not excuse him from the task of showing more precisely how the concept of theological models functions. It is not enough to draw the analogy with scientific models; he must specify his understanding of the relationship between theological models and theological theories, if indeed there is any difference (and Braithwaite assumes there is not).[9] When he claims that theology thrives on a diversity of models, and hails the flexibility of a theological model as its prime qualification, he should at least alert the reader to the fact that such an attitude to models is not shared by all philosophers of science.[10]

2.21 Methodological Comparisons

The principal concern in discussions of specific scientific models has been with the process of checking and testing the worth of these models, of deciding how they are related to 'the domain' which they help to explain and the overall theory of which they form part. This has been attended with more success than has the attempt to chart the course taken by the understanding in its selection of models, in its casting about for the right path to take, the one that will lead to a breakthrough in research, triggering

---

[9] 1967:1, "Models and Mystery", Discussion . . ., pp. 250-251.

[10] Bastin, Ibid., p. 260: "Ramsey's thesis demands that a good model should be extremely flexible in its relation to the experimental facts, whereas in actual practice this is the last thing the scientist wants . . ."

'discovery' or promoting 'explanation'. In theology the case has, predictably, been somewhat similar, most of the discussion having been initiated on the basis of an unfavourable comparison between scientific and theological methods. Theology was placed on the defensive, and required to produce its 'scientific' credentials, or at least display a readiness to abide by the findings of some process of verification or falsification. Ramsey's treatment at this point represents an important shift of ground, a shift which can be considered an evasion only by those who require a comparison of models in theology and in science to yield identity. His proposed amendment of empirical verification to empirical fit is vague and unsatisfactory if it is expected to be a finished criterion, ready for use in all cases with no particular case in mind. Yet it is precisely such expectations that it calls into question.

The classical scientific ideal of predictability has to be modified by the recognition that scientific inquiry and research is a human undertaking—more complex, more imaginative, less rigid and impersonal than the received accounts of scientific method would have us believe. Ramsey's concept of empirical 'fit' represents one attempt to make the adjustment which will admit the personal dimension in research, in argument and decision procedures, whatever the science. His development of the concept, and his justification of the large claims he makes for it, leave much to be desired, but it should not for that reason be lightly dismissed. It would be a mistake to regard 'empirical fit' simply as a ruse to slip theology past the defences set up by proponents of the falsifiability thesis, and gain admittance to the realm of meaning without paying the high price normally exacted. It is meant to apply, to a degree, in all the sciences, whether 'physical' or 'human'. Decision procedures in the physical sciences, leading to the acceptance, rejection or revision of a model, need not initially give much thought to personal factors; these will come in at a later stage, as psychological or aesthetic recommendations of the model, and also as reminders of the important and intrinsic role that imagination has in scientific method. In the human sciences, however, the emphasis must be different, since personal factors are central to their subject matter, and the researcher has from the first to take explicit account of a vagueness which must attend his testing procedures owing to the elusive personal element that characterizes human reality.

Yet it must be said that such a large scale comparison of physical and human sciences needs more care and patience than Ramsey has exhibited. He presents us with the makings of a theory, as we have traced these in his pursuit of a more adequate empiricism, but he places too much reliance on the suggestions to be found there, and exploits these where he might have been expected to weigh them more carefully against other, standard methodological discussions. Perhaps we may say that Ramsey would have made a more valuable contribution if, instead of enthusiastically exploiting the suggestions of his metaphor of 'empirical fit', he had contented himself with the close study of a few cases of alleged 'fit', and in this way given us a controlled account of how such an appeal to empirical fit operates. His writings abound in examples, but for the most part they are too hurried, too much concerned with bringing one to 'see' the fit in a disclosure situation. His powers of suggestion, in this way, would seem to exceed his powers of analysis, where the accumulation of examples only distracts from the task of 'showing' what criteria, if any, lie behind the selection of examples offered.

2.22 Methodological Problems Peculiar to Theology

Apart from the difficulties that arise in maintaining the larger claim about the method of human sciences, complications arise in the consideration of theology. The efforts of the theologian are directed not merely toward understanding, but toward presenting for acceptance a truth or a mystery which is received from a source, and is directed toward an end, quite different from any of the other sciences with which theology is compared. An historical study of specific cases in christian theology is needed to help determine the degree or kind of difference obtaining between the understanding that is sought respectively in, let us say, history, philosophy and theology. Such a study would be historical, since its aim would be to chart the course actually taken in a theological inquiry or controversy, and to determine what models prevailed and for what reasons. It would be of philosophical importance since such a case history would promote a more definite account of theological methodology and would help bring greater precision to the questions we have often found ourselves asking in this context. In particular, what kind of understanding is sought and attained in theology? By what kind of criteria is it judged? How is it related to the conviction of faith, of religious commitment? How are the models which are approved in theology assimilated into religious language? Were they first suggested at that level and then approved by the theologian? If so, on what did the theologian base his approval? Or did they proceed from theological reflection and become established in religious usage through catechesis, liturgical prayer, preaching, and the like?

Ramsey has undertaken studies of theological models in their historical setting, a particularly good example being that of the different models that have been used in Atonement theology;[11] but he has been concerned with a quite different question, viz. that of restraining the theologian's tendency to lose sight of the metaphorical character of his thinking. Indeed this has been the burden of much of his discussion of theological models, and it is not to be overlooked since, if it does nothing else, it directs our attention toward crucial questions in theological methodology. Granting that models play a central role in theological understanding, we must still ask where they come from, how they are selected, what makes them theological, what difference, if any, there is between a theological and religious use of models. If Ramsey can be credited with having initiated, or advanced, discussion along these lines, he cannot be said to have brought it to the point where these questions can be answered with any assurance.

3. Models: Religious and/or Theological?

The need for a clearer statement of how 'religion' and 'theology' are related to each other in Ramsey's scheme has already been noticed. An attempt will be made in this section to bring the question into sharper focus, by asking in what ways and to what extent Ramsey would be prepared to differentiate the use of models in 'religious language' and their use in 'theological language'. It will be argued first that he is confused on this, if not actually inconsistent. As a way of coming to grips with the problem, we will then try to pin him down on the question of what he takes to be distinctive of theology, and with that as a clue we might be able to assess the relevance and cogency of his thesis about models—both as a point of comparison with science and as an interpretation of 'religious' knowledge.

---

[11] 1965:1, Christian Discourse . . ., pp. 28-60.

3.1 Unsounded Ambiguities of 'Religious' and 'Theological'

In view of the distinction on which he insists between "being sure in religion" and "being tentative in theology", it is reasonable to expect that it will have some influence on his terminology, particularly on the use he makes of 'religious' and 'theological' respectively. If it is necessary to differentiate 'religious' and 'theological' attitudes, may we not expect a similar difference to be noticed in his usage of 'religious' and 'theological' language? If it is legitimate to press the distinction in this way, where does it lead us? Do we come to see more clearly what Ramsey has, perhaps in an unsatisfactory way, been pointing to? Or do we uncover, yet again, serious ambiguity or carelessness in his thinking?

The title of his first major work seems content to equate the two: Religious Language: An empirical placing of theological phrases. We are told that it "illustrates what follows from grounding theological words and phrases in what I have called a characteristically religious situation."[12] A reference, later in the same work, to "a characteristically theological situation"[13] reinforces the suspicion that he makes no difference between them. When, in On Being Sure in Religion (1963), he comes to lay emphasis on a distinction between religion and theology, we look in vain for some recognition of the need to revise, or at least clarify, his earlier usage. If we understand the distinction to be between the disclosure situation, of which we are 'sure', and the disclosure models, which are revisable, we can agree to what he is suggesting and still be uncertain about his terminology. It is not enough for Ramsey to have made the distinction, and to have argued its necessity and wisdom. He should have taken more notice of the difficulty involved in maintaining such a subtle distinction, and taken some measures to contain the inevitable ambiguity attending the use of favourite phrases like those we have noted: 'religious language', 'religious situation', 'theological language'. The use of the word 'religious' is particularly problematic now, in the light of the distinction, because on the one hand we have a 'religious' disclosure situation characterized as sure, and a 'religious' response expressed in language which has to be characterized as tentative. Whatever the sense given to 'religious' in the latter case it seems to be perfectly compatible, and indeed easily confused, with 'theological'. Does he make any distinction between 'religious' and 'theological' expressions, models, contexts?

---

[12] 1957:1, Religious Language . . ., p. 9.

[13] Ibid., p. 74.

3.2 Models in a Religious Context

It is both disappointing and puzzling to find Ramsey paying so much lip service to the importance of contextual analysis, of keeping language in touch with a disclosure situation, and then failing to do precisely this when we most need to see him do it. He considers a long list of widely different metaphors or models that are used in the language of the Old Testament, and without apparent concern for any actual context or for the degree of weight attaching to their use, he draws the very general conclusion that

> here is theological language directly related . . . 'to the world of experience': here are religious situations linked with 'secular' situations; here is talk about God which has plain links with the discourse of ordinary life. Here is religious life and theological language linked with the life and talk of home, friends . . .[14]

It seems a rather sweeping generalization to take any and every instance of a metaphor used in a psalm, a prayer, a prophetic poem or exhortation, and lump them together indiscriminately as theological models. Yet this would seem to be precisely what Ramsey is bent on doing:

---

[14] 1966:1, "Talking about God . . .", p. 79.

> The same could also be said about the characterization of God as 'my rock, and my fortress . . . my strong rock, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower' (Ps. 18,2). Here is language about God gaining its relevance by means of what I have called 'models'. Now what is involved when models are used in this way?[15]

We may prefer to ask what has happened to the concept of models when it is invoked in this way. Put more accurately, the question that troubles us at this point is, what does this tell us about his concept of theological models, and more specifically about his concept of theology? What do we learn from this about his concept of theological understanding, and about how it relates to 'religious life' and to other (broadly 'scientific') kinds of understanding?

In the first place we need not expect that the concept of theological understanding will be easily arrived at, nor that it will be without complexity. What we are presently interested in learning is how Ramsey would answer our question about the differences between a use of metaphors, or models, in prayer, in preaching, in philosophical or systematic theology, and—by way of stronger contrast—in the natural sciences.

---

[15] 1966:1, "Talking about God . . .", p. 79.

3.21 Theology's Task

We may begin by noticing what he has had to say at different times on the subject of theology's task, and we may hope that this will shed some light on our more general question. The task of the philosophical theologian, according to Ramsey, is "to elucidate the logical oddness that must of necessity belong to theological language",[16] by which he means to point up the 'logical' differences constitutive of 'theological language' and to suggest reasons for these differences. A more explicit statement of this task, and of what it entails, leads one to believe that it is no less than the central concern of all theology:

> the central problem of theology is how to use, how to qualify, observational language so as to be suitable currency for what in part exceeds it—the situations in which theology is founded.[17]

This suspicion is confirmed by a later statement which is even more emphatic and exclusive:

> the only distinctive function theology can or need claim is that of being the guardian or spokesman of insight and mystery, and it may see its primary function as one of alerting other disciplines to that mystery which each discipline in its own way endeavours to understand.[18]

The theologian's task seems then to reduce to keeping open the possibility of a disclosure situation, of maintaining

[16] 1956:1, "Empiricism and Religion . . .", p. 162.

[17] 1957:1, Religious Language, pp. 42-43. Cf. 1960:1, "Contemporary Empiricism . . .", pp. 172-173.

[18] 1964:1, Models and Mystery, p. 67.

or fostering the conditions necessary for 'religious' discernment, for the recognition and acknowledgment of what beckons beyond the limits of "observational language". He has even gone so far as to connect this theological task with the concept of revelation, or of "God speaking to us in our own day":

> The theologian's primary task is to be expert in his own field, and to bring into play not one or two choice passages, or some particular slogan of a Reformation or counter-Reformation, but all and every element in the Christian dispensation that can be grist to the mill. . . . Assuming that, or in so far as, these biblical narratives and classical references were themselves interlocked with a contemporary culture and social pattern, and in this wider context had their point, then there is reason to hope that this original point may now break in on us as we bring alongside our own particular situation. We may then, using an obvious model, talk of God speaking to us in our own day.[19]

What is to be noticed in each of these characterizations of theology's "central problem", "only distinctive function", "primary task", is the concern to situate it with respect to "other disciplines" and recommend it as the 'disclosure medium' in contemporary culture. It is difficult to determine with any precision what the theologian's "own field" is, in which he is called upon to be expert, but even when he speaks more specifically, for example of "systematic theology", it is with the wider matter of "disclosure reference" that he is most concerned:

---

[19] 1963:1, On Being Sure in Religion, p. 35.

> the task of systematic theology is twofold. First, it will organize models on any one theme. . . . But even systematic theology explicitly or implicitly must always make the disclosure reference clear: showing how the models point beyond themselves, to find their fulfilment in a mystery which eludes the kind of direct statement which models themselves generate.[20]

'Disclosure' would thus appear to be a labour-saving word of considerable merit, offering as it does the appearance of common ground shared in the use of models in the sciences, in theology and in more broadly 'religious' language.

3.22 Scientific and Religious Sources for Theological Models

Despite the frequency with which Ramsey has taken up his theme of theology and the sciences being united in a common disclosure situation which is 'religious', or in the acknowledgement of a common mystery which calls forth a religious response in worship, it remains doubtful if he has recognized any of the ambiguity surrounding it. When he characterizes a disclosure situation as religious, in what sense is he using the word 'religious'? We may grant that a disclosure excites wonder and awe in us, and awakens us to a keener sense of 'mystery', but do these merit to be called 'religious' in any but a weak sense? Is there not a radical shift in meaning when we speak of a specifically religious and Christian disclosure of mystery—the revelation of 'the Word made flesh'? It would seem that metaphysics could meet the requirements of the first instance, but even if we regard such a metaphysics as 'theological', it draws on a notion of theology which is vastly different from that suggested by the phrase 'Christian or revealed theology'. Ramsey's conception of theology's task straddles differences which should have been explored more carefully, and less hastily bridged. As long as he assumes that the wonder and mystery that fire the breast of the metaphysician are essentially one with the christian's worship and faith in the Incarnate Mystery, we have to question the thoroughness of his thinking.[21] He owes us a much more careful account of how theology—and we understand him to be thinking ultimately of 'christian or revealed theology'—is related to such disparate forms of thought and life as metaphysics, all other academic disciplines, religious life and distinctively christian behaviour.

---

[20] 1963:3, "Theological Literacy", p. 30.

A similar and more specific criticism can be made of his proposal that one of the tasks of systematic theology will be to "organize models on any one theme". The problem here is that the models to be organized are drawn from two quite distinct sources, which cannot be treated as one without a more careful argument than any Ramsey has had to offer. One of these sources is the religious life and usage of the christian community, the other is the contemporary culture, particularly the sciences.[22] These latter provide the theologian with the models, and hence the disclosure possibilities, which will enable him, in the now familiar idiom, to articulate more fully the religious claims that the cosmic mystery makes upon us. What part is played in this by the religious life and usage of the christian community, if not of the theologian himself? How are models or metaphors managed there, in prayer and preaching and catechesis? Are these grist for the theologian's mill in the way that scientific models apparently are? Are they organized, graded and balanced, in virtue of a specific skill in theological weights and measures, or is the decision of appropriateness, in such situations, one that is made for the theologian, at a stage prior to theological thinking, at the level of 'faith'? On this question, too, Ramsey owes us a more careful discussion.

---

[21] Cf. 1952:1, "Miracles . . .", pp. 29-30: " . . . For 'worship' is the compact name conveniently given to our awareness of the two-ordered activity which confronts us. This is perhaps to say that there is, in the end, something not altogether unlike Wittgenstein's one-time mysticism, something like scientific wonder, something like religious faith, which is the justification for metaphysics in general and miracles in particular." Cf. supra. 1.4, p. 203, footnote 5.

[22] Cf. 1964:1, Models and Mystery, p. 70; and 1964:5, "A New Prospect . . .", p. 530.

3.3 Theological Understanding and Faith

When we try to plot the relationship between theology and faith, as it operates in Ramsey's thinking, we experience a familiar difficulty. It is possible to characterize his general position, but when we look more closely at what he has to say specifically on the subject, unclarity reigns.

When reviewing his comments, made in different contexts, on the nature of theology's task, it seemed that there was no essential difference between philosophical and systematic theology, between natural and revealed theology. The theologian's task was to portray and preserve the suitably odd character of religious language, to elucidate it by putting it in touch with the disclosure situation appropriate and necessary to it, and to stir disclosure possibilities whereever they are to be found, prompting the understanding to an active acknowledgement of the mystery which beckons but will always elude it. Generalities of this kind are useful for their suggestiveness, but beyond that should be treated with restraint and cautious scepticism. They mask differences and muffle questions which cannot safely be ignored. One essential difference, already remarked on, which it fails to make clear, is that between natural and revealed theology, between, let us say, theistic metaphysics and christian theology.[23] We will not pursue this further here, but take up instead a more specific question regarding the relationship between Ramsey's view of theology and of faith.

3.31 Difficulties

If we take his general statements as our guide, it is not easy to determine whether he conceives of theology leading to faith, or proceeding from it, or in some way doing both. We have usually taken him to suggest that it proceeds from, and is at the service of, faith.[24] He has invited us, as we progress in theological understanding, to remember its source and goal is a "christian disclosure" of a mystery to which we respond, appropriately, with love and worship:

> As we learn to be articulate in theology, we must at every point be sensitive and critical about our assertions—sensitive to discern how they arise out of, and must consequently be referred for their elucidation

---

[23] This is not to say that he does not recognize this distinction, only that it is obscured by his usage, meaning by 'theology' sometimes Metaphysical, sometimes Christian Theology. The latter derives from a unique source, and develops in a unique way, as he suggests: "Christian Theology is thus to be seen as spreading from the Bible, in which already it had its first expressions, until the Creeds emerge as a definitive stage in consistent mapping, and supply us with rules to guide subsequent Christian discourse". (1963:1, On Being Sure in Religion, p. 66). What is lacking is a careful discussion of the differences between 'revelation' as the disclosure basis of Christian theology, and 'insight' as the disclosure basis of Metaphysical theology.

[24] Cf. supra, III, 2.312, p. 181.

> to, Christian disclosures; critically aware of their logical peculiarities and partial character. What we have to learn is the thrill of theological discovery, a rhythm of faith and love with understanding.[25]

The metaphor of 'rhythm' employed here conveniently begs the question of how, in the precise matter of selecting and developing 'theological models', understanding and faith are related. When we think only of the disclosure situation as the context for theological understanding, and of mystery as its defining limit, the difficulty seems less acute; we can interpret faith as our active participation in a christian disclosure situation, so that faith can be said to be the starting point and context for theology. However, when our attention is turned to the models which it is also theology's business to develop ('qualify'), evaluate ('grade'), and organize, it is then that a familiar haze descends on the discussion. It becomes less clear that he intends to maintain that theology always proceeds from faith as its starting point; at the very least there is a failure on his part to recognize, and take account of, the intricacy of the relationship, and in particular of the difference between theology and apologetics.

There are times when Ramsey speaks of the theologian developing models to the point of disclosure, or to the take-off point for 'the leap of faith':

[25] 1963:1, On Being Sure in Religion, p. 89.

> Insofar as I have appealed to a disclosure, to something which breaks in on us, to a situation in which we pass beyond any and all the models we have developed to date, when (as we say) we 'jump to it', there is involved what might be called logical leap, just as there is a logical leap between seeing '1+1/2+1/4+1/8+1/16 . . .' and saying '2'. So like Kierkegaard, and Lessing before him, I too can talk of a leap. But for me there is no special reason whatever for thinking of that leap as a leap across what Lessing called a 'grim broad chasm'. For me, it can be pictured not only just as well but I think rather better and more consistently with the rest of our language about God, as a leap into the arms of a loving Father, as a jump to an embrace . . .[26]

He would seem to be suggesting here that the theologian coaches us in 'the leap of faith', and that in alerting us to mystery, in fostering disclosure possibilities, he does no more than that: his work leads up to faith, but falls short of it. The leap remains to be made. On this view of it, theological understanding is related to faith in an external way, promoting the necessary conditions, enhancing its possibility, recommending its reasonableness or, in an even more interesting phrase, its "reasonable mysteriousness".[27] Although not always as explicit as this, much of his terminology is strongly suggestive of Apologetics. We need only recall the lesson he would have us draw from his analysis of theological language in terms of qualified models:

---

[26] 1963:3, "Theological Literacy", p. 10. In an earlier paper he questioned the appropriateness of 'the leap' image of faith: "Now we may agree that faith involves some sort of 'going beyond'; we have ourselves spoken of 'more than what's seen' breaking in on us in a disclosure—a discernment to which the religious man responds with an appropriate commitment. But this is not so much a 'leap' into some new territory as that we find ourselves being carried over into it, and then retrospectively have the job of mapping the track by which we have travelled, peculiar though it be." (1959:1, "Paradox in Religion", p. 211).

[27] Cf. 1958:1, John Locke, The Reasonableness . . ., Introduction, p. 18: "Locke reminds us that to be clear

> The over-all lesson to be learned, then, is that if we want to understand language which claims to talk of a mystery, if we want to understand some piece of distinctive religious discourse, we must first pick out the words which are most straightforward and most obviously descriptive. We then look at the other words to see which of them act as qualifiers behaving logically like an imperative to direct us to a disclosure. Every complete religious assertion will thus use words descriptively and also specify a technique by which we may move from 'what is seen' to 'what is seen and more', from the expressible to the point where the expressible becomes part of the inexpressible.[28]

By this it would seem that we are to understand that theological understanding is a catalyst for faith, ensuring the proper development of language in the direction that leads toward faith. Yet this would not be totally accurate, since he also interprets the 'directive' character of religious language in a quite different way, as directing us not to 'the vision of faith' but to 'the life of faith', to live and act in a distinctive manner. Indeed, in the summary following the remarks just quoted it is this second meaning of 'directive understanding' which he offers:

---

about the claims of the Christian faith we must first be clear about what is revealed, about its empirical basis. It is in relation to that basis that its claims to be reasonable, and reasonably mysterious, will stand or fall. . ."

[28] 1963:3, "Theological Literacy", pp. 11-12.

> The broad conclusion may be expressed alternatively by saying that we must recognize two sorts of 'understanding'. One arises when we use words descriptively; the other arises when we use words which, in Berkeley's phrase, direct us how to act, when we engage in activity directed toward that with which we are descriptively familiar.[29]

How are these two senses of 'directive' related? Do they offer us a better perspective on theological understanding and its relationship to faith?

If we take theology to be 'directive' in this dual sense, prompting a disclosure by the development of models and also promoting, if not prescribing, a fitting form of life or behaviour, we may have the clue we need. By 'faith' Ramsey understands active, responsive participation in a christian disclosure situation, with respect to which the theologian's task is to provide both "moral and doctrinal explication" of the disclosure and the demands it makes of us:

> No behaviour precepts, no theological conclusions follow incorrigibly from a moment of vision . . . But . . . we must certainly see to it that Christian convictions, arising in disclosure, win a constant explication in behaviour and thought.[30]

There can be no mistaking the relationship suggested here. It is the convictions of faith—"Christian convictions, arising in disclosures"—which furnish the theologian with his task of "explicating" them at the level both of thought

---

[29] 1963:3, "Theological Literacy", p. 12.

[30] 1965:1, Christian Discourse . . ., p. 26.

(language) and of action (life, commitment). We are led to conclude then that, from this point of view, Ramsey conceives of theology as the medium in which the convictions of faith become reflective, and are more consciously and more fully possessed as their path is traced out in "moral and doctrinal explication".

In the end, we have to say that the two points of view are only partially reconciled. The grounding of theological language in a disclosure situation provides a common context, within which attention can be focussed now on the evoking of disclosure, now on its explication.

3.32 Source of Difficulties

The ambivalence remains, and must be expected to remain until we have a clearer account than any Ramsey has yet offered of the relationship between disclosures and models, which is simply the larger context of our difficulty with the relationship between faith and theological understanding. He shifts too readily from disclosure as the source of our models to disclosure as the achievement of understanding (coupled with the acknowledgement of mystery) to which models contribute.[31] No doubt the complexity of a disclosure situation requires that we do not insist on a chronological reading of this distinction between disclosure as the source of models, and disclosure as their aim.[32] But until we have learned, from a closely studied instance, all there is to be learned of the complex relationship between disclosure and models, we must regard his theory of disclosure models as still sub judice: rich in suggestions perhaps, but insufficiently elaborated and tested.

---

[31] Another illustration of this tendency is the following passage, where disclosure is spoken of both as a product —"generated by" models ("a particular strand of discourse") —and as a source: "Suppose we call what discloses itself, X, so that X gives the reference of any and every cosmic disclosure. How do we talk about X? My answer is, once again, in terms of the model—the feature which the dis-

4. Conclusion

Much of the foregoing criticism can be resumed in the following comment by Bastin:

> It is rather as though Ramsey were presenting us with a whole range of "partly-baked ideas" . . . In addition to my general objection to p.b.i.'s in this kind of writing you may make the scholarly objection that they ignore considerable literatures which have been written on closely analogous subject matter; that they are elusive; that they jump from one thing to another instead of working something out properly.[33] But that is only to say that they are partly baked.

Ramsey's rejoinder to this—that "models . . . are all partly baked ideas" and that "theology which is too well

---

closure has high-lighted. Sometimes, it will be because the disclosure has been generated by a particular strand of discourse; at other times the model may be given as the self-selected feature of the disclosure situation". (1967:1, "Models and Mystery, Discussion . . ., p. 265).

[32] Cf. supra, III, 2.11, p. 163.

[33] 1967:1, "Models and Mystery, Discussion . . ., pp. 262-263.

cooked is disastrous"[34]—evades the main thrust of the objection. It is not his theological but his methodological ideas that are being characterized as "partly baked", and it is difficult to understand how he can affect to be unaware of this.[35] He gives evidence, in reply to another criticism of Bastin, of some uneasiness on the point, and insists that it has always been his aim to provide a methodology, and a criteriology, which was anything but "partly baked":

> I do not think I can be fairly accused of making Christianity safe for "vague" thinking. Christianity will always display approximate, tentative thinking as it tries to understand "mystery". But my whole endeavour is to provide criteria to test its reliability, and to avoid that vagueness which displays a lack of logical rigour and is quite undisciplined.[36]

In the light of the many difficulties we have uncovered in this chapter, we must judge this statement of his "whole endeavour" as somewhat wishful.

The most damaging criticism that can be made of Ramsey is that in his own 'meta-theological' writings he has not

[34] 1967:1, "Models and Mystery", Discussion . . ., pp. 262-263.

[35] Bastin prefaced his remarks by saying, "we find no adequate background for the idea of disclosure from the sciences: that is the main conclusion of this commentary". His criticism of what we can call Ramsey's 'meta-theological ideas' is that they are 'suggestive' and no more (in that sense, "partly baked"). They do not get beyond this stage, and "that has the effect that nothing is ever properly followed up". (Ibid., p. 262).

[36] Ibid., p. 267.

heeded the lessons he set himself to teach theologians. He has relied too heavily on the 'disclosure power' of examples, and has too often seemed oblivious of the strongly metaphorical cast to the very criteria he offers in the name of "logical rigour". In short he has been too anxious to introduce theologians to the jargon of 'logical empiricism', and to reap the benefits of a promising line of comparison between models in science and in theology, without pausing to take stock of the complications and possible confusions that confront him at the very start. In particular he has not sufficiently questioned the appropriateness of empirical or scientific language as a 'model' for religious and theological language, yet the strain put on this 'model' to make it serviceable in theology suggests that the question should have had its moment. At least before pressing the claims of a more adequate empiricism and of disclosure models on theologians and empiricists alike, he could have hesitated with profit over the possibility that empiricism, science, theology and religion might require more careful identification, and a more cautious introduction to each other.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The chronological listing of Ramsey's works is as complete as it has been possible to make it. The remainder of the bibliography has been selected with a view to filling in the background of the dissertation and to extending the discussion beyond its present limits.

Where it is useful to know the date of a first edition, this has been inserted immediately after the title of the work in question.

I. Ian T. Ramsey: Bibliography

1948:1. "Man and Religion: Individual and Community", *Proceedings of the 10th International Congress of Philosophy*, (1948), 308-310.

1949:1. "Some Reflections on a Contemporary Problem raised by Science and Religion", *The Cambridge Journal*, 2 (1948-1949), 288-300.

1951:1. "Science and Religion" (BBC Discussion with C. A. Coulson), *CPAS Fellowship Paper*, 13 (May-June 1951), 15 pp.

1952:1. "Miracles: an Exercise in Logical Mapwork" (Inaugural Lecture at Oxford, Dec. 1951),
(a) Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952.
(b) SPCK Theological Collections (3), *The Miracles and the Resurrection*, (London: SPCK, 1964), 1-30.

2. "The Challenge of Contemporary Philosophy to Christianity", *The Modern Churchman*, (1952), 252-269.

1953:1. "Notions and Ideas in Berkeley's Philosophy", Actes du XIe Congrès Internationale de Philosophie, 13 (1953), 66-71. (cf: 1966:3.)

2. "Homage to George Berkeley, Sermon preached at the Festival Service in the Chapel of Trinity College, Dublin", Hermathema, 82 (1953), 113-127. (cf: 1966:3.)

1954:1. "Christianity and Language", The Philosophical Quarterly, 4 (1954), 332-339.

1955:1. "The Systematic Elusiveness of 'I'", The Philosophical Quarterly, 5 (1955), 193-204.

1956:1. "Empiricism and Religion: A Critique of Ryle's Concept of Mind", The Christian Scholar, 39 (1956), 159-163.

2. "The Paradox of Omnipotence", Mind, 65 (1956), 263-266.

3. "Persons and Funerals: what do Person Words mean?", The Hibbert Journal, 54 (1956), 330-338.

*4. "An Empiricist's View of Religious Belief: Discussion", The Cambridge Review, (1956), 404-405. (also: 1966:2(a).)

1957:1. Religious Language. An Empirical Placing of Theological Phrases. (London: SCM 1957; New York: Macmillan 1963.)

2. "Ethics and Reason", The Church Quarterly Review, 158 (1957), 153-160.

3. "The Logical Character of Resurrection Belief", Theology, 60 (1957), 186-192.

1958:1. John Locke. The Reasonableness of Christianity, with A Discourse of Miracles, and part of A Third Letter Concerning Toleration, edited, abridged and introduced by I. T. Ramsey. (London: A. C. Black 1958.)

1959:1. "Paradox in Religion", Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, s.v. 33 (1959), 195-218.

2. "The Feast of Meeting", The Church Quarterly Review, 160 (1959), 11-20.

1960:1. "Contemporary Empiricism: Its Development and Theological Implications", The Christian Scholar, 43 (1960), 174-184.

2. Freedom and Immortality. (London: SCM 1960).

3. "Some Further Reflections on Freedom and Immortality", The Hibbert Journal, 59 (1960-1961), 348-355.

1961:1. "Religion and Science: A Philosopher's Approach", The Church Quarterly Review, 162 (1961), 77-91.

2. "On the Possibility and Purpose of a Metaphysical Theology", Prospect for Metaphysics, ed. I. T. Ramsey, (London: Allen and Unwin 1961), 153-177.

3. "History and the Gospels", Studia Evangelica, III, (Oxford 1961), 201-217.

4. "On Communicating Religion", Problems in Christian Education, 5 (1961), 16 pp.

5. "The Challenge of the Philosophy of Language", The London Quarterly and Holborn Review, 186 (1961), 243-249.

1962:1. "Christian Education in the Light of Contemporary Empiricism", Religious Education, 57 (1962), 95-96.

2. "Logical Empiricism and Patristics", ed. F. L. Cross, Studia Patristica, V (Berlin 1962), 541-547.

1963:1. On Being Sure in Religion. (London: Athlone Press 1963).

2. "Biology and Personality: Some Philosophical Reflections", The Philosophical Forum, 21 (1963-1964), 32-47.
(cf: 1965:2).

1963:3. "Theological Literacy", (The Alden Tuthill Lectures, 1963), The Chicago Theological Seminary Register, 53 (May 1963), 1-40.

1964:1. Models and Mystery. (London: OUP 1964).

2. Religion and Science: Conflict and Synthesis. (London: SPCK 1964).

3. "The House which Barth Builds", (Review) The Modern Churchman, NS 7 (1963-1964), 187-192; 243-247.

4. "Toward the Relevant in Theological Language", The Modern Churchman, NS 8 (1964-1965), 46-58. (cf: 1966:1).

5. "A New Prospect in Theological Studies", Theology, 67 (1964), 527-533.

1965:1. Christian Discourse: Some Logical Explorations. (London: OUP 1965).

2. "Biology and Personality: Some Philosophical Reflections", Biology and Personality: Frontier Problems in Science, Philosophy and Religion, ed. I. T. Ramsey. (Oxford: Blackwell 1965).

3. "Contemporary Philosophy and the Christian Faith", Religious Studies, 1 (1965), 47-61.

4. "The Intellectual Crisis of British Christianity: Letter to the Editor", Theology, 68 (1965), 109-111; 353.

5. "The Authority of the Church Today", Authority and the Church, ed. R. R. Williams. (London: SPCK 1965).

6. "Discernment, Commitment and Cosmic Disclosure", Religious Education, 60 (1965), 10-14.

1966:1. "Talking about God: Models, Ancient and Modern", Myth and Symbol, ed. F. W. Dillistone (London: SPCK 1966), 76-97. (cf: 1964:4).

2. Christian Ethics and Contemporary Philosophy, ed. I. T. Ramsey. (London: SCM 1966).
   (a) "An Empiricist's View of the Nature of Religious Belief: Discussion", 84-88. (See: 1956:4).

(b) "Moral Judgments and God's Commands", 152-171.
(c) "Towards a Rehabilitation of Natural Law", 382-396.

3. "Berkeley and the Possibility of an Empirical Metaphysics", *New Studies in Berkeley's Philosophy*, ed. W. E. Steinkraus. (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), 13-30. (cf: 1953:1 and 1953:2).

4. "A Personal God", *Prospect for Theology*, ed. F. G. Healey. (Welwyn: Nisbet 1966), 55-71.

5. Interview with Ved Mehta, *The New Yorker* 41 (Nov. 20, 1965), 132-144.

1967:1. "Models and Mystery", Discussion: R. B. Braithwaite, Joan Miller, Ted Bastin; Reply by Ian Ramsey, *Theoria to Theory* 1 (1967), 250-269.

1968:1. "Polanyi and J. L. Austin", *Intellect and Hope. Essays in the Thought of Michael Polanyi*, edd. T. A. Langford and W. H. Poteat. (Duke University Press 1968).

Two Book Reviews

1963: Review of Maclagan, *The Theological Frontier of Ethics* (London 1961), in *Mind* 72 (1963), 294-298.

1967: Review of Matson, The Existence of God (New York 1965), in *The Journal of Philosophy* 64 (1967), 128-133.

Unpublished Notes

"Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion".

II. Books

Aquinas, St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 3 (1a, 12-13), Trans. H. McCabe, O.P. New York: McGraw-Hill, n.d.

Ayer, A. J. *The Problem of Knowledge*. London: Pelican, 1956.

__________. (ed.), *Logical Positivism*. New York: Free Press, 1959.

Barbour, Ian G. Issues in Science and Religion. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1966.

——————. (ed.), Science and Religion. New Perspectives on the Dialogue. New York: Harper, 1968.

Barfield, Owen. Poetic Diction. A study in meaning. (1928) London: Faber, 1952.

Beardslee, W. A. (ed.). America and the Future of Theology. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967.

Berkeley, George. Works, vols. 1-3, edd. A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop. London: Nelson, 1948-1950.

Black, Max. Models and Metaphors. Ithaca: Cornell, 1962.

——————. (ed.), The Importance of Language. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1962.

Bochenski, J. M. The Logic of Religion. New York: University Press, 1965.

Bradley, F. H. Essays on Truth and Reality. Oxford: University Press, 1914.

Burrell, D. B. Analogy and Philosophical Language. Unpublished dissertation: Yale, 1965.

Butler, Joseph. The Analogy of Religion. London: Dent, 1956.

Campbell, James I. Logical Positivism and Religious Statements. Unpublished dissertation: Notre Dame, 1965.

Carnap, R. The Logical Syntax of Language. (1937). New Jersey: Littlefield, 1959.

Cleobury, F. H. Christian Rationalism and Philosophical Analysis. London: Clarke, 1959.

Cushman, R. E. and E. Grislis (edd.). The Heritage of Christian Thought. New York: Harper, 1965.

Dilley, F. B. Metaphysics and Religious Language. Columbia University Press, 1964.

Dillistone, F. W. (ed.). Myth and Symbol. London: SPCK, 1966.

Downing, F. G. Has Christianity a Revelation? London: SCM, 1964.

Emmet, Dorothy M. The Nature of Metaphysical Thinking. (1945). New York: St. Martins, 1957.

Engelmann, P. Letters from Ludwig Wittgenstein, with a Memoir. Oxford: Blackwell, 1967.

Evans, D. D. The Logic of Self-Involvement. London: SCM, 1963.

Farrer, A. A Science of God? London: Bles, 1966.

Ferre, F. Language, Logic and God. New York: Harper, 1961.

——————. Basic Modern Philosophy of Religion. New York: Scribners, 1967.

Flew, A. and A. MacIntyre. New Essays in Philosophical Theology. (1955). New York: Macmillan, 1964.

Gill, Jerry H. Ian Ramsey's Interpretation of Christian Lauguage. Unpublished dissertation: Duke, 1966.

Hanson, Norwood R. Patterns of Discovery. Cambridge University Press, 1958.

Healey, F. G. (ed.). Prospect for Theology. Essays in honour of H. H. Farmer. Welwyn: Nisbet, 1966.

Henle, P. (ed.). Language, Thought and Culture. University of Michigan Press, 1958.

Hepburn, Ronald W. Christianity and Paradox. Critical studies in Twentieth-century Theology. London: Watts, 1958.

Hesse, Mary B. Science and the Human Imagination. New York: Philosophical Library, 1955.

——————. Models and Analogies in Science. (1963). University of Notre Dame Press, 1966.

Hick, J. (ed.). Faith and the Philosophers. New York: St. Martins Press, 1964.

High, Dallas M. Language, Persons and Belief. Studies in Wittgenstein's "Philosophical Investigations" and Religious Uses of Language. Oxford University Press, 1967.

Holmer, Paul L. *Theology and the Scientific Study of Religion*. Minneapolis: Denison, 1961.

Hook, S. (ed.). *Religious Experience and Truth*. New York University Press, 1961.

Hordern, W. *Speaking of God. The Nature and purpose of Theological Language*. New York: Macmillan, 1964.

Hudson, W. D. *Ludwig Wittgenstein. The bearing of his philosophy on Religious Belief*. London: Lutterworth, 1968.

Hume, David. *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge. Oxford: Clarendon, 1888.

Hutchison, John A. *Language and Faith. Studies in Sign, Symbol and Meaning*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963.

Johnson, E. A. *The Crucial Task of Theology*. Virginia: John Knox Press, 1958.

Kaufman, Gordon D. *Relativism, Knowledge and Faith*. Chicago University Press, 1960.

Kazemier, B. H. and D. Vuysje (edd.). *The Concept and the Role of the Model in Mathematics and Natural and Social Sciences*. Dordrecht: Reidel, 1961.

Knights, L. C. and B. Cottel (edd.). *Metaphor and Symbol*. London: Butterworths, 1960.

Langford, T. A. and W. H. Poteat (edd.). *Intellect and Hope. Essays in the Thought of Michael Polanyi*. Duke University Press, 1968.

Lewis, C. S. *They Asked for a Paper*. London: Bles, 1962.

Lewis, H. D. (ed.). *Contemporary British Philosophy. Third Series*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1961.

Lonergan, B. J. *Insight. A Study of Human Understanding*. London: Longmans, 1957.

————. *Collection*, ed. F. E. Crowe. New York: Herder, 1967.

Malcolm, N. *Ludwig Wittgenstein. A Memoir*. Oxford University Press, 1958.

Martin, J. A. The New Dialogue Between Philosophy and Theology. New York: Seabury Press, 1966.

Mascall, E. L. Christian Theology and Natural Science. London: Longmans, 1956.

———————. Words and Images. London: Longmans, 1957.

———————. Theology and Images. London: Mowbray, 1963.

Miles, T. R. Religion and the Scientific Outlook. London: Allen and Unwin, 1969.

Mitchell, Basil (ed.). Faith and Logic. London: Allen and Unwin, 1957.

Moore, G. E. Philosophical Papers. London: Allen and Unwin, 1959. (New York: Collier Books, 1962).

Munz, P. Problems of Religious Knowledge. London: SCM, 1959.

McInerny, Ralph M. (ed.). New Themes in Christian Philosophy. University of Notre Dame Press, 1968.

MacIntyre, A. (ed.). Metaphysical Beliefs. London: SCM, 1957.

McIntyre, John. The Shape of Christology. London: SCM, 1966.

Maclagan, W. G. The Theological Frontier of Ethics. London: Allen and Unwin, 1961.

Macquarrie, J. God-Talk. An Examination of the Language and Logic of Theology. London: SCM, 1967.

Nagel, W: The Structure of Science: Problems in the logic of Scientific Explanation. New York: Harcourt, 1961.

Nielsen, H. A. Methods of Natural Science. An Introduction. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1967.

Passmore, J. A Hundred Years of Philosophy. (1957). New York: Basic Books, 1966.

Paton, H. J. The Modern Predicament. A Study in the Philosophy of Religion. London: Allen and Unwin, 1955.

Phillips, D. Z. The Concept of Prayer. London: Routledge, 1965.

__________. (ed.). Religion and Understanding. Oxford: Blackwell, 1967.

Polanyi, M. Personal Knowledge. Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy. (1958). New York: Harper, 1964.

__________. The Tacit Dimension. New York: Doubleday, 1966.

Preller, V. Divine Science and the Science of God; a reformulation of Thomas Aquinas. Princeton University Press, 1967.

Richards, I. A. The Philosophy of Rhetoric. Oxford University Press, 1936.

Russell, B. Logic and Knowledge. Essays 1901-1950, ed. R. C. Marsh. New York: Macmillan, 1956.

__________. An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth. London: Allen and Unwin, 1940.

Ryle, G. The Concept of Mind. London: Hutchinson, 1949.

Schedler, N. O. Methodology in the Metaphysics of Theism: A Philosophical Analysis of the Method of Austin Farrer and Ian Ramsey. Unpublished dissertation: Princeton, 1967.

Schilling, Harold K. Science and Religion. New York: Scribners, 1962.

Sewell, E. The Orphic Voice: Poetry and Natural Science. Yale University Press, 1960.

Smart, Ninian. Reasons and Faiths. An Investigation of Religious Discourse, Christian and Non-Christian. London: Routledge, 1958.

Smith, John E. Religion and Empiricism. Marquette University Press, 1967.

__________. Experience and God. Oxford University Press, 1968.

Steinkraus, W. E. (ed.). New Studies in Berkeley's Philosophy. New York: Holt, 1966.

Strawson, P. F. *Individuals*. London: Methuen, 1959.

Toulmin, S. *Foresight and Understanding. An Enquiry into the Aims of Science*. New York: Harper, 1963.

Torrance, T. F. *Theology in Reconstruction*. London: SCM, 1965.

Urmson, J. O. *Philosophical Analysis*. Oxford University Press, 1956.

Van Buren, P. *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel. Based on an Analysis of its Language*. New York: Macmillan, 1963.

Vidler, A. R. (ed.). *Soundings. Essays concerning Christian Understanding*. Cambridge University Press, 1962.

Ward, James. *Psychological Principles*. Cambridge University Press, 1920.

__________. *Essays in Philosophy*. Cambridge University Press, 1927.

Wheelwright, Philip. *Metaphor and Reality*. Indiana University Press, 1962.

White, Alan R. *G. E. Moore: A Critical Exposition*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1958.

Winch, P. *The Idea of a Social Science and its Relation to Philosophy*. London: Routledge, 1958.

Wisdom, J. *Paradox and Discovery*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1965.

Wittgenstein, L. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. (1921). London: Routledge, 1963.

__________. *The Blue and Brown Books. Preliminary Studies for the "Philosophical Investigations"*. (1958). New York: Harper, 1965.

__________. *Philosophical Investigations*. New York: Macmillan, 1953.

Woods, G. F. *Theological Explanation*. Welwyn: Nisbet, 1958.

Zuurdeeg, W. F. An Analytical Philosophy of Religion. New York: Abingdon, 1958.

III. Articles

Achinstein, Peter. "Models, Analogies, and Theories", Philosophy of Science 31 (1964), 328-350.

———. "Theoretical Models", The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science 16 (1965/1966), 102-120.

Austin, W. H. "Waves, Particles and Paradox", Rice University Studies 53 (Spring 1967).

———. "Models, Mystery, and Paradox in Ian Ramsey", The Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 7 (1968), 41-55.

Berggren, Douglas. "The Use and Abuse of Metaphor", The Review of Metaphysics 16 (1962/1963), 235-258; 450-472.

Burrell, D. B. "Aquinas on Naming God", Theological Studies 24 (1963), 183-212.

———. "Analogy and Judgment", Continuum 2 (1965), 134-146.

Charlesworth, M. J. "Linguistic Analysis and Language about God", International Philosophical Quarterly 1 (1961), 139-167.

Dyson, A. O. "The Status of Theology in a Scientific World-View", The Modern Churchman NS 7 (1964/1965), 41-49.

Ferré, F. "Mapping the Logic of Models in Science and Theology", The Christian Scholar 46 (1963), 9-39.

Gill, Jerry H. "The Language of Theology. Martin Heidegger or Ian Ramsey?", Encounter 27 (1966), 195-225.

———. "God-Talk: Getting on with it. A Review of Current Literature", Southern Journal of Philosophy 6 (1968), 115-126.

Hall, R. C. "Is There a Special Religious Language?", Anglican Theological Review 46 (1964), 88-96.

Hesse, Mary B. "A New Look at Scientific Explanation", Review of Metaphysics 17 (1963/1964), 98-108.

Holmer, Paul L. "Scientific Language and the Language of Religion", Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion I (1961-1962), 42-55.

__________. "Theology and Belief", Theology Today 22 (1965), 358-371.

__________. "Language and Theology", Harvard Theological Review 58 (1965), 241-261.

Jones, J. R. "The Two Contexts of Mental Concepts", Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society NS 59 (1958-1959), 105-124.

Kaufman, Gordon D. "Two Models of Transcendence: An Inquiry into the Problem of Theological Meaning", The Heritage of Christian Thought, edd. R. E. Cushman and E. Grislis. New York: Harper, 1965. 182-196.

__________. "On the Meaning of 'God'. Transcendence without Mythology", Harvard Theological Review 59 (1966), 105-132.

Lewis, C. S. "Is Theology Poetry?", They Asked for a Paper. London: Bles, 1962. 150-165.

__________. "Transposition", They Asked for a Paper. London: Bles, 1962. 166-182.

Lewis, H. D. "Freedom and Immortality", The Hibbert Journal 59 (1960/1961), 168-177.

Mascall, E. L. "The Intellectual Crisis of British Christianity: Letter", Theology 68 (1965), 147.

Montgomery, J. W. "The Theologian's Craft. A Discussion of Theory formation and Theory Testing in Theology", Concordia Theological Monthly 37 (1966), 67-98.

McMullin, Ernan. "Metaphor and Reality", The Modern Schoolman 40 (1962/1963), 184-193.

__________. "What do Physical Models Tell us?". Invited paper delivered at the International Congress on Logic, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science. Amsterdam, September 1967.

McPherson, T. "Assertion and Analogy", Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society NS 60 (1959/1960), 155-170.

Nielsen, H. A. "Analytical Philosophy of Religion", The New Scholasticism 40 (1966), 62-79.

Phillips, D. Z. "Philosophy, Theology, and the Reality of God", Philosophical Quarterly 13 (1963), 344-350.

————. "Religion and Epistemology: Some Contemporary Confusions", Australasian Journal of Philosophy 44 (1966), 316-330.

Smart, Ninian. "Paradox in Religion", Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, suppl. v. 33 (1959), 219-232.

————. "The Intellectual Crisis of British Christianity", Theology 68 (1965), 31-38; 351-352.

Trout, V. R. "The Validation of Scientific Theories", Restoration Quarterly 5 (1961), 83-88.

Ward, James. "Bradley's Doctrine of Experience", Mind NS 34 (1925), 13-

VITA

John Joseph McCluskey, born 1935 in Galston, Ayrshire, Scotland.

1954-56: studied philosophy in Roosendaal, Holland.

1956-60: studied theology at Mill Hill, London.

1960: ordained priest for the society of Mill Hill Missionaries.

1960-63: read history at Downing College, University of Cambridge.

1963-64: studied for teacher's diploma at the University of Cambridge, teaching for one term at Highgate School, London.

1964-69: studied philosophy at the University of Notre Dame, completing dissertation with the aid of a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, and graduating Ph.D. in February, 1969.